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THE
PROGRESS
OF
CIVIL SOCIETY.

A

DIDACTIC POEM,

IN SIX BOOKS.

BY
RICHARD PAYNE KNIGHT.

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PREFACE.

THE learned reader will perceive, that the general design of the following work is taken from the latter part of the fifth book of Lucretius, beginning with verse 923 ; and that I have also borrowed many particular passages, which I should have given at the bottom of the page, did I not rather wish that the whole should be read in its proper order, as a text, upon which I have written a commentary, as nearly in the same style and manner, as my poor abilities, and the inferior language which I employ, will allow ; for that style and manner I consider as perfect. Lucretius is, in my opinion, the great poet of the Latin language, always equal to his subject, and never either above or below it ; plain, where only plain sense was intended to be expressed, and highly ornamented and elevated, where brilliant imagery required brilliant colouring ; but still ornamented and elevated by the genuine beauty and intrinsic dignity of his own language, and not by any affected finery of foreign idiom, or venerable stiffness of antiquated phraseology. His style is purely Latin ; clear, simple, elegant, and vigorous ; never overstrained by gigantic efforts of supernatural sublimity, or debased by affected ease and colloquial vulgarity. Alike in the loftiest flights of poetry and deepest discussions of philosophy, his verse flows equal to the occasion, as the spontaneous efflux of a mind of such vast and universal energy, as never to need any extraordinary exertion.

It will likewise appear that, in treating of the same subject, I have occasionally repeated ideas and observations that are to be found in Pope's Essay on Man ; but as they are ideas and observations, which had been often repeated before, I have just as good a right to them as he had. My manner of expressing, as well as of introducing and employing them, is, I believe, very different from his ; which, perhaps, I ought not to mention as a circumstance in my favour : but, nevertheless, I cannot think the style of the Essay on Man, so happy as that of Pope's earlier performances ; such as the Rape of the Lock, the Epistle from Eloise to Abelard, and, above all, the Translation of the Iliad. The concluding address, indeed, and many of the images and illustrations are most beautiful ; but an attempt at excessive conciseness has frequently rendered his expressions crabbed and obscure in the didactic parts ; as in the following couplet :

Self-love still stronger, *as its objects nigh* ;
Reason's at distance, and in prospect lie.

The ellipsis of the verb *are* in the first line, between *objects* and *nigh*, is extremely harsh, and renders the passage scarcely English.

Of the same kind, too, is the following :—

The good or bad the gifts of fortune gain ;
But these less taste them, *as they worse obtain*.

According to the regular and natural course of construction, *worse* should be an adjective belonging to *gifts* ; but it is evidently meant as an adverb to *obtain*.

The same desire of condensing into one couplet what had

better have been extended into two or three, has sometimes made him debase the solemnity and dignity of the didactic moralist, by a sudden and unexpected transition to the levity, and even the vulgarity, of the satirist, as in the following:—

Rewards that either would to virtue bring
No joy, or be destructive *of the thing.*

And,

What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
The soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy,
Is virtue's prize: a better would you fix?
Then give humility a coach and six.

The pert flippancy of the last of these four lines so ill accords with the calm and beautiful solemnity of the two first, that it quite spoils the effect of the passage.

I do not mean, by pointing out these blemishes in this great poet, to palliate or excuse my own; but merely to account for my having preferred a more diffuse manner to that rigid conciseness which was the cause of them; and which, had I attempted it, would have been the cause of much worse.

Vanity is always active and ingenious in eluding the mortifications of disappointment; whence the faults of Pope, and the cold reception first given to Milton, are the constant topics of consolation with every unsuccessful clinker of rhymes, or drawler of blank verse. Let them, however, have the beauties of either of these writers, and the public will be ready enough to excuse and overlook the blemishes; for though professed critics hunt for faults, the general mass of readers seek only for beauties.

It is not my intention, however, to contest the truth of the following excellent observations in the Rambler : “ He that endeavours after fame by writing, solicits the regard of a multitude fluctuating in pleasures, or immersed in business, without time for intellectual amusements ; he appeals to judges possessed by passions, or corrupted by prejudices, which preclude their approbation of any new performance. Some are too indolent to read any thing till its reputation is established ; others too envious to promote that fame which gives them pain by its increase. What is new is opposed, because most are unwilling to be taught ; and what is known is rejected, because it is not sufficiently considered, that men more frequently require to be reminded than informed. The learned are afraid to declare their opinion early, lest they should put their reputation in hazard ; the ignorant always imagine themselves giving some proof of delicacy, when they refuse to be pleased : and he that finds his way to reputation through all these obstructions, must acknowledge that he is indebted to other causes besides his industry, his learning, or his wit.” —

“ Yet there is a certain race of men, that either imagine it their duty, or make it their amusement, to hinder the reception of every work of learning or genius, who stand as centaurs in the avenues of fame, and value themselves upon giving Ignorance and Envy the first notice of a prey.”

But nevertheless, what this great writer has here so justly remarked, and so admirably expressed, is more applicable to works of erudition and instruction than to those of taste and fancy ; which speak more for themselves, and make their appeal to a greater number of competent judges ; so that it is impossible

for the few, *who value themselves upon giving Ignorance and Envy the first notice of a prey*, to guard the avenues of fame against them. If they possess only the merit of pleasing (an indispensable merit to poetry, the intention and end of which is to amuse and delight), the public will find them out, and be pleased with them ; for, tardy and indolent as we are in seeking instruction, we are all sufficiently active in seeking pleasure, whether it be of sense or intellect. The half-learned, indeed, *often imagine themselves giving some proof of delicacy, when they refuse to be pleased* ; and, if they have any pretensions to literary fame themselves, they are too envious *to promote that in others which gives them pain by its increase* ; but the simply ignorant are, as far as I have been able to observe, always ready enough to be pleased, and more inclined to excuse faults than overlook merits : they read for amusement, and are satisfied if they find it, without interrupting their enjoyments to inquire whether that which affords it, ought to afford it or not ; such inquiries being generally the employment of those, whose acquired knowledge is just sufficient to obscure their natural feelings, but not to enlarge their understandings. Being too timid and perplexed to judge for themselves, and yet too vain to confess their embarrassment, they apply to books of criticism for a taste ready made ; which, as it is meant for show, and not for use or gratification, fully answers their purpose, provided it is, like their clothes, of the newest fashion.—

Not for himself he sees, or hears, or eats ;
Artists must choose his pictures, music, meats.

This class of secondary critics, which is by far the most nu-

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merous of any, never venture to commend a work till its reputation is established ; and if they presume to censure, it is in dark and general terms, which may make the ignorant suspect that their sagacity has discovered a great deal more than their candour or prudence will allow them to reveal ; for, though perfectly masters of the rules and terms of their art, they are entirely unacquainted with a more important part of it ; namely, the application of them, without which the art itself, its rules, and terms are totally useless : as this cannot be learned, but must, after all, depend upon feeling, we may as well trust to that at once ; and conclude, that when we are really and innocently pleased and entertained by any production of taste and fancy, it is such as is properly adapted to afford pleasure and entertainment, and therefore deserving of our commendation.

There is one fault, and one only, which the generality of common readers never excuse, and which professed critics rarely discover, and still more rarely condemn :—that is dullness. Those, who read poetry only to be amused and delighted, throw it down with disgust, when it affords neither amusement nor delight ; but those, who read only to exercise or display their sagacity in detecting or exposing blemishes, conclude it to be excellent, when they find it blameless. They consider themselves as judges trying a cause, whose duty it is to apply the law strictly to the case before them, without suffering any other considerations to influence their minds ; an admirable mode of proceeding in the distribution of penal justice, but a most absurd one in the exercise of critical discernment ; the use of which is to guide, not exclude, the influence of sympathy and imagination.

Poetry itself is, strictly speaking, nothing more than imagery

and sentiment, justly expressed in the musical sounds of metrical language; for though in every long or complex work, whether narrative or didactic, there must necessarily be many passages devoid of both, yet such passages are to be considered merely as component parts of the web or substance, in which the flowers of poetry are inwrought. In the choice, the arrangement, and display of imagery, the taste and judgment of the poet are most distinguishable; and it is in this that writers of rival excellence in every thing else, are most unequal to each other.

If the image is too minutely and accurately displayed, it becomes what, in painting, we call *spotty*; that is, instead of concentrating the attention to one general combination of parts, subordinate to each other, it leaves it distracted and confused among many parts, equally glaring and prominent. Of this, examples are to be found in Ovid, Ariosto, and Tasso; and above all in Cowley, who imitated and surpassed the luxuriant vices of the Italian poets.

If, on the contrary, the image be expressed in terms too loose and general, it becomes obscure and indistinct; and from an excess of what painters call *breadth*, conveys no precise idea, nor leaves any determinate impression upon the mind. This is the case with almost all the descriptions in Fingal, with many in Milton, and with some few in Virgil; and I have observed that the young and ignorant are very apt to be dazzled with it, and to consider it as an excellence. They grasp at something, which they cannot comprehend; but which, being darkly shown through the mysterious glimmer of lofty and sonorous expressions, seems great in proportion as it is incomprehensible; whence, their imaginations, being excited and not limited, form phantoms of their own, and conclude them to be the meaning of what they

are reading. Homer is the only poet, who has exhibited much variety of descriptive imagery, and been uniformly excellent in all—distinct without minuteness, great without extravagance, and preserving, amidst parts strongly marked, the general composition unbroken and entire.

It is only from truth and variety of imagery, that I can hope to give the power of pleasing and entertaining to the kind of work, which I now present to the public ; and if it should be found not to possess that power, I will voluntarily submit it to condemnation, notwithstanding any useful information or moral instruction that it may appear to contain ; for such information and instruction, if not rendered pleasant and amusing by poetry, had better be left to plain prose.

In the works of the epic, the dramatic, and even the pastoral writer, interesting varieties of character and incident, of sentiment and expression keep the attention awake, and the feelings in action ; even where there are no technical beauties of poetry to assist or embellish them. The satirist, too, appeals to a very powerful and universal passion in his favour ; for, I fear, that even those among us, who are most benevolent in their actions and intentions, cannot help feeling some secret gratification—some faint spring of exultation rising in their own minds, when they hear others skilfully ridiculed, or adroitly censured. The didactic or philosophical poet alone has nothing to trust to, but the simple ingredients of his art, versification, and imagery :—like the painter of still life, he can excite no sympathies, but merely charm the sense by the richness and harmony of his colouring, or the understanding by the skill of his arrangement, and correctness of his drawing and composition.

Those, who are accustomed to admire the uniform glitter of

the present fashionable style both in verse and prose, will certainly think my colouring flat and insipid ; but do not let them imagine that any defects of this kind, proceed from negligence and inattention. On the contrary, the parts, which are least adorned, are in general the most laboured ; it having been my endeavour to adapt, as much as possible, the character of my style to the character of my subject ; and not, like that great orator, Mr. Prigg, to display as much eloquence upon a riband, as a Raphael. Great things, if happily conceived, will of themselves find great expressions ; but propriety, perspicuity, elegance, and simplicity in little, or common things, are only to be obtained by labour and study, which must not only be employed, but concealed.

Being induced by the peculiar circumstances of the present most eventful period to publish sooner than I intended, I have not spent so much time in correcting and polishing what I have written, as I think it requires ; but nevertheless, I trust that I shall not be found to have neglected any part of it ; for though talents capable of insuring success are the gift of Heaven, the proper use and diligent application of those talents, whatever they may be, are always in the power of the possessor. Unremitting attention, indeed, can only be supported by great strength of mind, as unremitting labour can only be supported by great strength of body ; but occasional attention, and occasional labour may be supported by any mind, and any body, capable of active exertion ; and if those, who cannot do much at once, will only return to their task the oftener, they will not be less likely to do it well ; for though the faculty of unremitting attention, be a proof of the strength of the mind, it is no more a proof of its

brilliancy, than the strength of body, which can bear continued labour, is a proof of muscular agility.

Every person, who feels or thinks that he writes well, finds writing a very pleasant amusement; but, if he exercises it merely as an amusement, he had better keep the benefits of it to himself; for to suppose that the abortions of his own idleness can afford proper occupation for other men's industry, is the most impudent excess of foolish vanity. There have, indeed, been minds of that superlative degree of energy, that to excel seems natural to them, and all forced effort or exertion superfluous; but even these have oftener displayed their powers in fine passages than in fine compositions; there being, I believe, no extensive work of great and established reputation, that is not evidently the result of long study and assiduous labour. Even Shakspeare's best plays have been proved, by the industry of late editors, not to have been such hasty productions as they were once imagined; it being so far from true, that they were never corrected or retouched, that some of them were entirely remodelled more than once.

It was lamented by Goldsmith, that he had come too late into the world; for that Pope and other poets had taken up the places in the temple of fame; so that as but few at any period can possess poetical reputation, a man of genius can now hardly acquire it.* This complaint, though approved by Johnson, I cannot think just; nor, indeed, any thing better than a common place excuse for indolent vanity. The merit and celebrity of Goldsmith's two short poems, the Traveller, and Deserted Village, prove incontestably that had he exerted his faculties, in that species of com-

* Boswell's Life of Johnson, vol. II. p. 231.

position, with the unremitting diligence and activity of Pope, he would have held a place equally honourable and conspicuous in the temple of fame. The malignity of envy might, indeed, have precluded him from it while living ; but the moment that death had placed him out of the reach of that passion, the snarling of the critics would have been drowned in the acclamations of the multitude. Innumerable subjects, capable of every kind and degree of embellishment, are still unoccupied ; and the boundless variety of nature affords endless shades of character, and modifications of incident and imagery, that have not yet been exhibited in any language, much less in that of the English, whose poetical range is yet very limited.

It may be said, indeed, that the expressions of passion admit but of little modification or variety ; it being impossible that a furiously jealous man should not express himself somewhat like Othello, and a wickedly ambitious man, like Macbeth, whatever the incidents may be that call forth their respective passions : but nevertheless Shakspeare has exhibited these passions with equal truth and propriety in different characters, and yet without any repetition, or even similitude of expression ; and consequently any other dramatic poet, possessed of his talents, might do it. King Richard is wickedly ambitious, as well as Macbeth ; and Posthumus madly jealous, as well as Othello ; and yet how different are the characters of their respective ambition and jealousy !

It has been justly observed, I think by Dr. Johnson, that all the epic poets since Homer have done little more than diversify the incidents, and new name the characters of their great original : but we must not conclude from thence that nothing

more is to be done. Varieties of incident are without end ; and many of the most dignified and tragic characters of Shakspeare would be quite new in epic compositions, as many of those of Homer would be in dramatic ; for though almost every writer of tragedies, from Æschylus to Racine, has exhibited them by name, no one has drawn them with truth and accuracy, or with any of those nice shades of discrimination which distinguish them in the Iliad and Odyssey.

What I have said upon liberty of conscience and worship, at the conclusion of the third Book, is partly taken from the consular oration of Themistius to the Emperor Jovian, which I recommend to the attentive perusal of all those who wish to make religion conducive to morality, rather than subservient to hierarchy. The various edicts, he observes, by which preceding princes had bestowed privileges or inflicted penalties on particular systems of faith, or forms of worship, had only served *to convict their subjects of worshipping the purple rather than God*,* the only effect which such laws ever had, or ever will have.

A short abstract of the general sense of a part of this oration has already appeared as a quotation, in a Discourse on a particular part of the ancient worship, which I composed many years ago, at the request, and for the use of a society instituted for the encouragement of liberal art, and of those branches of literature which are peculiarly connected with it. Since that time, some learned persons, who have employed their talents in similar researches, have published quotations from my work, and among them this quotation from Themistius, which by that means came under the observation of certain monthly critics ; who never

* Ειτα ελεγχομενα παντα γελοιως, ἀλεγχιδας, ο θεον δεσμπεπειτες.

having heard of Themistius, or supposing him to be some modern Jacobin, fell unmercifully upon the passage, as a new and impious attack upon religion.*

Another writer (one of those unsuccessful candidates for literary fame, who are continually seeking consolation for their own disappointments, in abuse bestowed indiscriminately on every more fortunate competitor) has told the public, that this discourse is a most abominable work, fit only to amuse the leisure of a Tiberius, and to convey infidelity under the mask of obscenity.†

As for *infidelity*, it is a vague term of general accusation, which every hypocrite or fanatic applies to those who appear to be less hypocritical or fanatical than himself; and has a near resemblance to that of *incivism*, which in France, every factious or wrong-headed republican applies to those who appear to be less factious or wrong-headed than himself. I shall, therefore, take no farther notice of it than merely to say, that I have never printed or written any opinion on the subject of Christianity, which I cannot prove to be consistent with the duties of a good subject, a good citizen, and a good man: I might perhaps add, of a good Christian, did I understand the meaning of the term, or know the duties which it implies; but having found, by some little reading and observation, that it has not only had a different signification in every age and country, but in the mouth of almost every individual who has ever used it, I will not pretend to it, till its meaning is so far determined, that I may know

* Review of Lieut. Moore's Narrative in the *British Critic*.

† In a note to a very dull piece of satire, intitled *Literary Pursuits*.

whether I can justly pretend to it or not. What is established by law, I respect and obey ; but still, as it appears to me to be in many respects extremely different from what was inculcated by the founder of Christianity, and his immediate successors, I am not certain that I can thereby claim the title of a *good Christian*. Could I suppose that any private opinion of so unimportant an individual as myself could be of importance to the public, I might make a general profession of my faith, in the words of the most elegant and classical Christian writer of antiquity ; who, though he lived in a very believing age, and wrote under the patronage of a very bigotted and persecuting prince, was not then reckoned either a heretic or an infidel.——*απονοιας γαρ μανιωδες τινος ηγεμαι ειναι, διερευνασθαι την τε θεε φυσι, οποια ποτε εσιν. αιθρωπω γαρ εδε τα αιθρωπεια εσ το ακριβεις, οιμαι, καταληπτα. μη τοι γε δη τα εσ θεε φυσι ηκοντα. εμοι μεν όν ταυτα ακινδυνως σεσιωπησθω μονω τω μη απισησαι τα τετιμημενα. εγω γαρ αν εδεν αλλο περι θεε οτιβν ειποιμ, η οτι αγαδος τε πανταπασιν ειη, και ξυμπαντα εν τη εξαστια τη αυτε εχει. λεγετω δε ωσπερ γινωσκειν έκασος υπερ αυτων οιεται, και ιερευς, και ιδιωτης.* Procop. de B. G. l. 1. c. iii. p. 314.

As for *obscenity*, it is a more specific term ; but as we seem to differ concerning its moral meaning, or, at least, concerning the moral tendency of the different subjects to which it is indiscriminately applied, a short explanation on that head may be necessary to justify me from an imputation, which, if well founded, would, I admit, be seriously criminal.

We call *obscene* those descriptions and representations which tend to promote debauchery, by inflaming appetite and exciting desire ; and it is against these that the rigour of our penal laws is very properly exerted ; as they tend equally to the moral and

physical corruption of the people:—to debilitate the body, as well as to debase the mind.

But we also call *obscene* the descriptions and representations of an anatomist or surgeon, who explains the use, or points out the modes of disease, and means of cure of certain parts of the human body; though they are so far from inflaming appetite, or exciting desire, that if they have any effect on them at all, it must be the direct contrary.

We may, with equal propriety, call *obscene* the work of the historian or antiquary, who endeavours to trace the symbolical or mystical use, which has been made of these parts of the body, in any particular system of religion or philosophy, though it may be equally void of any thing inflammatory or lascivious.

In this sense, and in this sense only, my discourse may be called *obscene*; for I flatter myself that it is totally free from any of that *criminal obscenity*, which tends to promote lewdness and debauchery: so far from being written with any such intention, the whole tenour of it goes to prove, that no such immoral meaning ever did belong to those symbols; and if the writer above-mentioned found his appetites excited, or his desires inflamed by any part of it, he has the misfortune to have appetites and desires of a very extraordinary kind, and such as certainly qualify *him* for the society of a Tiberius. Perhaps it were well if the friend, who *insisted on his* reading the book, had also enabled him to understand it.

It has been the practice of many late writers scrupulously to avoid contaminating their pages or their plates with any of this last and innocent kind of obscenity; but to take every opportunity of clandestinely introducing as much of the former as they

possibly can ; a practice doubly culpable, as it presents the poison in the shape of food, and thus induces many to take it, who, had it appeared in its natural form, amidst the rubbish of stalls and shop windows, would have turned from it with disgust. This is particularly the case with Hawkesworth, and the Abbé Chappe d'Anteroche ; both of whom suppressed many curious particulars of the Priapic worship of the countries whose manners they describe ; at the same time that they have both gone frequently out of their way to introduce voluptuous and lascivious descriptions, which give no information, nor answer any purpose, but that which ought to have been avoided. The most explicit representations of the Priapic idols of the Zungores could not, I conceive, have excited the lusts of any person whatever, at the same time that they might have afforded very curious, and even useful, information concerning that system of symbolical worship, which seems to have prevailed over the whole earth : but the florid descriptions and lascivious representations of Russian baths, marriages, &c. &c. could afford no scientific information, even if they were true ; and as the style, both of the writing and the plates, bears strong marks of fiction, we may safely conclude, that they were introduced merely as decorations, to make the book mischievous and amusing. I do not find, however, that the fastidious delicacy of those critics, who have been so shocked at the Discourse on the worship of the Priapus, ever induced them to express a hint of disapprobation at these luscious dainties, which probably afforded them what they were disappointed at not finding in that Discourse.

Should I be tempted to resume the studies which led to it, and to give a more detailed account of the system of religious

philosophy to which the subject of it belongs, I shall, without fear or hesitation, repeat and submit to the public any opinion or expression which it may contain: and as for the plates, they having been mostly copied from other publications, executed at the expense, and published under the authority of the Popes, or the kings of Naples, the defense of them does not belong to me. The most objectionable of them, and the only one which contains any thing like profaneness, was copied from De la Chausse's Museum Romanum, of which three editions have been published at Rome within this century, and from which the plate in question has been again published in the great collection of Grævius and Gronovius. It represents the male human organs of generation erect upon the head of a cock, in lieu of a beak, which head grows out of the bust of a man: beneath it, on the base, is written ΣΩΤΗΡ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ—SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD. The original, from which it is taken, is an antique bronze, preserved in the Vatican palace, where it has been publicly exhibited for near a century, without corrupting any one's morals or religion, that I have heard of. It did, indeed, once disturb the conscience of a superannuated cardinal, who requested Benedict XIV. to remove this profane ΣΩΤΗΡ from his sacred seat in the pontifical palace; but that excellent pope, and most worthy man, replied, with his usual pleasantry, *that he had no authority over such a personage; being himself but his vicar.*

After the number of ponderous volumes that have been written within these few years, upon subjects of political economy and moral jurisprudence, I cannot hope to give much new information in a poetical abstract, the very nature of which will not allow of argumentative detail; but requires that the instruc-

tion conveyed, should be in images and descriptions, rather than in syllogisms and demonstrations. I may, nevertheless, have the merit of exhibiting in a more advantageous point of view, and under a more attractive form, what has been discovered by men of deeper research ; and thus contribute to extend, if not to increase, this most useful and important branch of knowledge : by decorating plain truth and common sense with the ornaments usually appropriated to fiction, I may also contribute to wean men's affections from those splendid paradoxes and pompous absurdities, by which several late writers, particularly Rousseau, have contrived to captivate the ignorant and unwary ; and to gain a reputation, which neither their learning nor their genius gave them any pretensions to : extravagant sophisms are the tinsel of understanding, as extravagant conceits are the tinsel of imagination ; and as the latter often pass for wit, so the former often pass for wisdom.

At a period so awfully eventful as the present, it is impossible to treat any subject of this kind so generally, as entirely to exclude temporary illustrations and allusions ; and, in these, I shall probably suffer the fate which moderate and impartial men always have suffered in times of turbulence and prejudice, that of being condemned by all parties. As my work, however, if it deserves consideration at all, will be entitled to it as *πτημα ες αει, μαλλον η αγωνισμα ες το παραχρημα*, I must leave this part of my case to posterity ; that disinterested and unbiassed judge, who will, sooner or later, decide fairly upon the merits and demerits of all, who are of sufficient importance to attract his notice : if I am not of that number, it matters little what judgment the present generation pass upon this, or any other of my literary labours.

There is another objection to introducing temporary matters in any long or elaborate work on a general subject; which is, that while spoken of as *present* by the writer, they become *past* before the work is finished. This is the case with the account of the state of France in the sixth Book, which was written during the reign of the Jacobins: that such scenes, however, may not soon be *present* again, both in that country, and in other parts of Europe, is rather to be hoped than expected.

N. B. The anecdote of Dr. Johnson, cited in the note, p. 120, is taken from his Life by Boswell, (Vol. III. p. 591 and 613, 8vo. ed.) who is alone answerable for the truth of it, which the author has heard questioned since his work came from the press. By citing it, he never meant to depreciate the previous obligations which Johnson was under to the royal bounty.

In the Preface, page xvi. line 10, *for* third Book *read* fourth Book.

BOOK I. OF HUNTING.

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B

PROGRESS OF CIVIL SOCIETY.

WHETHER primordial motion sprang to life
From the wild war of elemental strife;
In central chains, the mass inert confined
And sublimated matter into mind?—
Or, whether one great all-pervading soul
Moves in each part, and animates the whole;
Unnumber'd worlds to one great centre draws;
And governs all by pre-establish'd laws?—
Whether, in fate's eternal fetters bound,
Mechanic nature goes her endless round;
Or, ever varying, acts but to fulfil
The sovereign mandates of almighty will?—
Let learned folly seek, or foolish pride;
Rash in presumptuous ignorance, decide.

5

10

15

Let us less visionary themes pursue,
And try to show what mortal eyes may view;
Trace out the slender social links that bind,
In order's chain, the chaos of mankind,

Make all their various turbid passions tend,
 Through adverse ways, to one benignant end, 20
 And partial discord lend its aid, to tie
 The complex knots of general harmony ;
 And as the tides of being ebb and flow,
 And endless generations come and go,
 Still farther spread their ever-lengthening chain, 25
 And bid, 'midst varying parts, the mass unchanged remain.

 In every region of unbounded space,
 Where'er the quickening breath of life we trace ;
 Through all that o'er the earth's wide bosom creep,
 Or float in myriads through the briny deep; 30
 Through all that high in air suspended fly,
 Or, fix'd on rocks, in vital torpor lie ;
 Two graduated powers assert their reign—
 This leads to pleasure, and that flies from pain :—
 Two powers, derived from one efficient cause, 35
 Acting, in different ways, by equal laws ;
 While both alike, by adverse measures, tend
 To one eternal, universal end ;
 And in the common cause of life conspire
 To guard and feed its frail and feeble fire : 40
 Through constant change to bid the race remain,
 And still connect the links of nature's endless chain.

 Even the fix'd and senseless plant, that shoots
 Cold and unconscious from its earth-bound roots,

Some fainter irritations seems to feel, 45
 Which o'er its languid fibres gently steal :
 Whence drooping pansies dread the coming shower,
 And lilies close as night's dark shadows lower ;
 Mimosas shrink from too familiar hands,
 And sterile palm-trees pine for wedlock's bands ; 50
 Its leaves, when touch'd, the dionæa folds,
 And, grasp'd in death, the adventurous insect holds ;
 To guard its flower converges every dart,
 And drives their points into the invader's heart :
 The vine its curling tendrils spreads around, 55
 Clasps the small spray, and rises from the ground :
 While pendent o'er the rocks its branches run,
 And turn their blackening clusters to the sun.
 Yet still, obedient to mechanic laws,
 Each motion springs from its exciting cause ; 60
 Nor owns the regulating power of will
 To guide each act its purpose to fulfil.
 But where the organic frame is more refined,
 And dim sensation brightens into mind ;—
 With nicer texture where the nerves are wrought, 65
 And slow perception quickens into thought ;—
 Where every fibre to one centre tends,
 And each impression to that centre sends ;
 Fix'd in the complex storehouse of the brain,
 The fleeting visions of the past remain ; 70

Memory preserves, and reflex thoughts condense
 Each transient image of organic sense ;
 Combine the effect with the preceding cause,
 And mark each inference that reason draws ;
 Weigh all that 's past, and in the mind foresee
 From what has been, what afterwards may be. 75

Hence each strong impulse renovates its force,
 Expands its powers, and extends its course ;
 Fear flies the anticipated gripe of pain,
 While dire despair and sorrow swell its train : 80
 Hope from ideal pleasure gaily springs,
 And mounts aloft on fancy's airy wings ;
 Leads on the soul, and fans its latent fire,
 Till sated want expands to wild desire ;—
 Desire, at once the parent and the child 85
 Of furious passion and affection mild ;
 Which o'er the bosom now, with rigid reign,
 Exerts the tyrant power of hostile pain :
 And now, with every joy that mortals prove,
 Wantons propitious in the smiles of love :— 90
 Almighty Love ! whose unresisted sway,
 Earth, air, and sea, with one accord, obey ;
 Who, far as nature spreads her vital heat,
 Bids pleasure laugh, and rapture's pulses beat ;
 Each jarring element in concord joins, 95
 And sensual joy with social bliss refines ;

In softer notes bids Libyan lions roar,
 And warms the whale on Zembla's frozen shore ;
 Plans the republic of the frugal bee,
 Directs his toil, and cheers his industry ; 100
 Teaches the bold and predatory ant
 To guard his embryo brood from cold and want ;—
 To scoop the cave, and build the leafy cell,
 And safe in order'd government to dwell :—
 'Tis Love instructs the wanderers of the air 105
 In spring their pendent mansions to prepare ;
 To meet in flocks, and own instinctive laws,
 And join confederate in one common cause ;
 To explore the regions of the earth, and try
 Where best the soil and climate may supply
 The genial warmth, and necessary food, 110
 To waken life, and feed their callow brood.
 See ! in the trackless deserts of the skies,
 With daring wing the adventurous myriads rise ;
 Traverse the boundless undiscover'd deep, 115
 While adverse winds its raging bosom sweep ;
 Through gathering clouds still onward urge their course,
 And stem the currents with united force ;

v. 99. Though the working bees are generally supposed to be *neutrals*, their attachment to the female, or queen bee, seems to be rather a sexual inclination than instinctive obedience.

Spread the light texture of their feather'd sails,
 Ply their thin oars, and float upon the gales :— 120
 Nor can the heats of day or glooms of night
 Retard their speed, or interrupt their flight,
 Until the instinctive feelings of the breast
 Show the long sought for clime, and destined place of rest :—
 There love again bids joy their hearts inspire, 125
 And soothe their toils with gleams of soft desire ;
 To rapture tunes each warbling songster's throat,
 And breathes delight in every swelling note.

From the same source the attractive power began,
 Which changed the wandering brute to social man : 130
 First native lust the rugged savage led
 To the rank pleasures of his lawless bed :—
 Promiscuous glow'd the fierce instinctive flame,
 Uncheck'd by reason, and unawed by shame,
 Till, often cloy'd with what he oft desired, 135
 His passions sicken'd, and his nerves grew tired :—
 Then, lull'd in intervals of soft repose,
 The social thought of sympathy arose ;
 The converse of the soul the sense beguiled,
 And dalliance, turn'd to gentle friendship, smiled :— 140
 Still growing habit the fond couple binds,
 Connects their interests, and unites their minds :—
 Their rising offspring closer draw the chain,
 Strengthen each link, and bid its force remain :

Congenial hopes, and mutual wishes rise,
And weave connubial with parental ties.

145

The savage herds, that o'er the mountains stray
To crop the shrub, or seize the living prey,
With every milder race, that tamely feeds
On the rich verdure of the flowery meads,
Soon see their infant progeny mature,
Nor long, the parents' pleasing toils, endure ;—
No dawning hopes, or anxious fears they share,
Nor feel attachment grow from lengthen'd care ;
But still, as nature renovates the breed,
Their frail affections vanish and succeed.

150

Man's tardy race, in feeble cries and tears,
Wastes the slow period of its infant years ;
Creeps to maturity, and still demands
The fostering succour of the mother's hands ;
Whence fond affection no suspension knows ;
But, with the rising race, still rising grows ;
Fraternal with parental ties connects,
And, the still growing numbers, still collects ;
Farther and farther spreads its wide embrace,
In bands connubial, to each neighbouring race ;
Controls fell discord in its germs innate ;
And, with concentrated interest, builds the state.

160

Then public cares and public virtues rose
To guard from wants, and to protect from foes ;

165

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170

Surrounding danger and inventive need
 Refined each thought, and urged each venturous deed ;
 Taught the strong youth by toil to earn his food,
 And chase each prowling savage of the wood ;
 Exposed, to watch the gloomy night, and bear 175
 The damp, the chilling, or the sultry air ;
 With patriot zeal o'er distant hills to roam,
 And bring the captive spoil untasted home ;
 With wily arts entrap the feather'd brood,
 Or drag the scaly monster from the flood ; 180
 Attack the embodied wolves, or drive away
 The hungry lion from his captured prey.

Each selfish impulse to one end to guide,
 Here emulation rose, and jealous pride ;—
 Passions that stimulate, and yet control ; 185
 Divide the parts, and yet connect the whole :—
 Now, the soft bands of private friendship rend,—
 Then, bid their quarrels to one object tend ;
 Procure the weak protection from the strong,
 And turn to public right each source of private wrong. 190

Whether, united in one common cause,
 Obedient millions bend to complex laws,
 Or one small tribe, the vagrants of the wood,
 Simply combine for safety and for food ;
 The general passion is in all the same— 195
 All grasp at power, and all pant for fame :

Each individual, of distinction proud,
 Still tries to rise above the common crowd ;
 And, as his talents lead, through various ways
 To shine, the theme of envy or of praise.— 200
 But, as in vaulted roofs, the builder's art
 Sustains, by parts combined, each separate part ;
 And gravitation's common force directs
 To counteract in each its own effects ;
 So in those crowds which to one object tend, 205
 All still press towards, but none reach the end :
 While partial discords, to one centre bent,
 Serve but the general union to cement.

In this first stage of social life began
 The great distinctive attribute of man ; 210
 The power, in human organs only found,
 Of fixing thought in imitative sound ;
 Moulding the vocal stream of vital air
 Each warm impression of the soul to bear ;
 Transfer each sentiment, and spread around 215
 Reason improved in modulated sound.

By slow degrees the wonderous talent sprung
 As want impell'd, or practice tuned the tongue ;
 Long unsuccessful did the savage try,
 In measured notes, to articulate his cry ; 220
 And e'en when some enlighten'd mind had taught
 To join the measured sound with measured thought,

Long years elapsed ere yet one single horde
 Could make each sound and sentiment accord ;—
 Ere mimickry with memory combined, 225
 Could catch each note, and fix it in the mind :
 Instinctive mimickry, the guide of man !
 Which with his first gregarious state began ;
 Which every talent spread, and every grace,
 From one to many, through each rising race ; 230
 Which, still predominant, alike we find
 In every species of his various kind,
 From the malignant, sly, and chattering ape,
 That shames us with similitude of shape,
 Up to created being's boasted pride, 235
 The polish'd nation's intellectual guide ;
 Who, mild and steady, active and sedate,
 With power unfelt directs some happy state :—
 Such as the poet's wish has often form'd,
 When heavenly visions had his fancy warm'd ; 240
 And such as, realized at length, we see,
 Illustrious Washington, appear in thee !
 But still, as more society's refined,
 Each native impulse less affects the mind ;

v. 227. Το, τε γαρ μιμεοθαι, συμφυτον τοις ανθρωποις εκ παιδων εσι και τατω διαφερεσι των αλλων
 ζωσ, οτι μιμητικωτατον εσι, και τας μαθητες ποιειται δια μιμησης τας πρωτας και το χαιρειν τοις
 μιμημασι παισας. ARISTOT. POET. c. vi.

Instinct to intellect is slowly brought,
And vague perception methodized to thought :
Improving speech each young idea trains,
And wisdom's power o'er brutal force maintains.

245

See, the rude hunters, in their little state,
Convoke the synod for the grave debate ;
In long harangues, and solemn phrase, dispute
Where most the trees abound in ripening fruit ;
Where hollow'd rocks afford the safest caves,
Or murmuring rivers flow with clearest waves ;
Where the shy deer in greatest numbers stray,
Or lowing herds afford an easier prey ;
How best to shun or brave the tiger's rage,
Or 'gainst embodied wolves the war to wage :
Whether to guard and fence their chosen home,
Or to some safer hill or forest roam.

250

255

260

The hero's glories, and the statesman's boasts
Of wasting wars diffused o'er distant coasts ;
Of thousands swept to one promiscuous grave,
Some nice punctilio of a court to save ;
Their limited ambition never knew :—
Its means were simple, and its objects few :
Yet rage uncheck'd and foster'd hate supplied,
In private wrongs, the ills of public pride :
For, as the torrent with more fury roars,
As closer pent between contracted shores ;

265

270

So every passion, as 'tis more confined,
 More fiercely rages in the narrow mind ;—
 As few the sentiments which sway the breast,
 Each singly felt, more deeply is impress'd,
 Steady attachment and eternal hate
 Prevail alike in every savage state ;
 Vindictive malice, and benignant love,
 In wild extremes, their powers alternate prove.

Now friendship bids the daring warrior brave
 Want, toil, and death, his faithful friend to save ;
 Before him still he meets the inveterate foe,
 Faces the hatchet, and invites the blow ;
 Displays his bosom to the poison'd dart—
 Hails his saved friend, and hugs it in his heart.

Now sudden anger deals its deadly blows ;
 And streaming blood from silent murder flows ;
 Revenge and lengthen'd enmities succeed ;
 Foes rise from foes, and endless victims bleed :—
 Preserved with watchful care and secret art,
 Still ripening malice rankles in the heart ;
 Waits for the unguarded moment, and prepares
 Its venom'd dart, conceal'd in silent snares.

The wrong once suffer'd, nothing can efface
 The stain indelible, and fix'd disgrace :
 Distance and time would blot it out in vain—
 Still fix'd the rancorous sentiments remain :—

275

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295

Far as the vast Maragnon's waters flow,
 The vengeful savage seeks the offending foe;
 Nor toil nor danger—penury or pain,
 The direful purpose of his heart restrain :—

300

Onward he goes through unfrequented ways—
 Through dark tempestuous nights and sultry days ;—
 The envenom'd swarms, and deadly damps defies,
 That nightly round his feverous temples rise ;—

305

Unheeded, hears the watchful tiger growl ;
 And sees the hungry lion near him prowl :—
 E'en if prevented in the attempt he falls,
 Still for revenge his gloomy spirit calls ;

310

Entails his anger with his parting breath,
 And seals in blood the testament of death.

When tribes with tribes the petty warfare wage,
 The same fierce temper animates their rage :
 Tortures and lingering death the captive wait,
 And madness raves in the fell victor's hate :
 With grim delight the quivering limbs he tears ;

315

Quaffs the warm blood, and the live entrails shares.
 No plea of avarice, or claim of right
 Excites the quarrel, or provokes the fight :—

v. 296. “ I have known Indians go a thousand miles, for the purpose of revenge, in
 “ pathless woods, over hills and mountains, through huge cane swamps, exposed to the ex-
 “ tremities of heat and cold, the vicissitude of seasons, to hunger and thirst.” *Adair's
 Hist. of Amer. Indians*, p. 150.

Slaughter's at once his motive, and his end,—
 To that alone his daring efforts tend ;— 320
 Alone he glories over heaps of dead,
 And boasts of endless deserts round him spread.

Yet there no lawyers fatten on distress ;
 No purse-proud tyrants indigence oppress ;
 No venal statesmen riot in the spoil 325
 Of plunder'd industry, and patient toil :
 No victim of unfeeling power complains,
 Condemn'd to pine in solitude and chains ;—
 To live for misery, and slowly rot
 In the dark pestilential cave, forgot :— 330
 No pallid miser guards his useless store,
 And drives the poor and naked from his door :
 No selfish glutton, prodigal in waste,
 Aggravates want to stimulate his taste :
 No sloth-swollen martyr to luxurious ease 335
 Feels age untimely grow from dire disease.

His scanty food the savage earns by force ;
 By strength in arms, and swiftness in the course ;

v. 317. *Publicè maximam putant esse laudem (Germani) quam latissimè a suis finibus vacare agros : hac re significari magnum numerum civitatum suam vim sustinere non potuisse.* Cæsar, de B. G. lib. iv. *Civitatibus maxima laus est quam latissimis circum vastatis finibus solitudines habere.* Hoc proprium virtutis existimant, expulsos agris finitimos cedere, neque quemquam prope se audere consistere. Ibid. lib. vi. See also Ferguson's Hist. of Civil Society, p. 33.

Whence health and courage his firm sinews brace,
 And o'er his limbs diffuse their manly grace : 340
 In virid age he braves the wintry blast,
 And feels undamp'd his glowing spirits last,
 Till all his faculties their functions close,
 And tired nature claims its long repose :—
 Then some kind hand its wish'd-for aid employs 345
 To end the life, which he no more enjoys.

Yet oft their mangled limbs the hunters mourn,
 By the fell pard, or lurking tiger, torn ;
 Just left with life and strength enough to fly,
 And feel the pangs of lengthen'd misery :— 350
 With doleful cries they rend the desert air,
 And howl and yell in anguish and despair :
 No nurse's tenderness or surgeon's art
 Soothes or relieves the agonizing smart ;
 But, in wild woods and dreary caves, forlorn, 355
 They weep the night, and curse the lingering morn ;—
 Then turn disgusted from the dawning light,
 And sigh again for thick substantial night ;
 Till, to putrescent wounds and wants a prey,
 Slowly the nerves grow torpid, and decay ;— 360
 Slowly the ebbing tide of life retires,
 And the last struggling pang convulsed expires.

v. 345. See Robertson's History of America, B. iv. p. 400.

Oft too, impell'd by ignorance or want,
 They ate the noxious fruit or poisonous plant ;
 And oft, when waste improvident had spent
 What fortune in her favouring mood had sent, 365
 Long days of unrequited toil ensued,
 And famine press'd, when labour had subdued :
 From famine, various maladies began,
 And dire contagions thinn'd the race of man :
 Agues and fluxes shook his weaken'd frame, 370
 And plagues and fevers spread their deadly flame :
 Those ills that from repletion now proceed,
 Then flow'd from griping penury and need.

Yet famine first instructed prudent care 375
 To weigh the future, and for want prepare :—
 When summer's suns in fervid splendours shine,
 To dry the blackening clusters of the vine ;
 To pluck the figs unripen'd from the spray,
 And spread 'em withering in the heats of day ; 380
 To cull the pendent pods, and homeward bear
 The self-sown harvest each revolving year :
 Or else, in climes where chilling frosts maintain
 The powers inert of winter's gloomy reign,
 To press the acid berries of the brake 385
 With honey mix'd, into the lasting cake ;
 Or dry the scaly captives of the streams
 In the short summer's transitory beams ;

Or their thin sides in icy shackles tie,
And stop the progress of putridity.

390

With conscious pride the savage views his store,
And dreads the failure of the chase no more ;
Pleased, in the earth-built hut or cavern'd stone,
To call the little treasury his own,
And with the insolence of wealth, defy
The sterile season and the stormy sky.

395

Confirm'd possession makes the den his home,
And calms each wandering wish that bade him roam ;
With growing love and fondness still he sees
The long frequented vale, and friendly trees,
Which o'er his head their grateful shades extend,
And from the blustering winds his home defend ;
While each new comfort of his rising race
More closely binds him to the chosen place ;
Social with local interests confounds,
Concentrates hope, and wandering fancy bounds.

400

405

With growing tenderness, the rising race
The soft and tranquil prejudice embrace ;
Cling to the sheltering rock and shadowing tree,
With all the warmth of filial piety ;
View their changed features in the well-known brook,
And fondly back at infant pleasures look ;
Recall, as wandering o'er some once loved spot,
The pleasing memory of joys forgot ;

410

Each childish action of their youth retrace,
And feel again its triumph or disgrace ;
While each fond image bids another rise,
And fancy decks what memory supplies.

415

Hence, by degrees, the embryo town began,
As wants or habits form'd its artless plan ;
The increasing numbers part the chosen spot,
And each with rival toil adorns his lot ;
Extends his little hut, and clears around
The obtruding thorns and brambles from the ground ;
Brings from the shatter'd tree the ponderous beam,
With thatch of reeds and rushes from the stream ;
Constructs, with rude design, the simple shed,
From rains and tempests to protect his head ;
The walls with bark, and pliant wattle weaves,
And spreads his easy couch of wither'd leaves.

420

425

430

To guard the whole from danger or surprise,
Large stakes around the extensive circle rise ;
Wind-rifted trees fix'd firmly in the ground,
And transverse boughs with twisted osiers bound ;
Whose solid strength and sharpen'd points oppose
The wandering beasts of prey, or neighbouring tribes of foes.

435

Thus fix'd, the sense of public good excites,
Its best support, respect for private rights ;

Connects the many, to repress the wrong
 Which oft the feeble suffer'd from the strong ; 440
 To guard and shelter property from spoil,
 And give to each the produce of his toil :
 When o'er far distant hills, through wilds of wood,
 The adventurous band their roving game pursued ;
 Or march'd with clubs undaunted to oppose, 445
 On plains remote, invading hosts of foes,
 Public respect secured whate'er they left
 From open robbery, or secret theft ;
 Gave to the orphan what his sire possess'd,
 And the deserted widow's wrongs redress'd : 450
 The assembled elders weigh each doubtful cause,
 Quote past decisions, and pronounce them laws ;
 While listening matrons in their minds record
 Each upright sentence, and each sapient word ;
 Transmit them down with care from age to age, 455
 Impress'd on memory's historic page.
 Still, as tradition's lengthening chain descends,
 Order connected spreads and rule extends ;
 With growing years each maxim seems more wise,
 And reverend age the want of force supplies. 460
 But long inured to rapine, waste, and spoil,
 The listless savage shrunk from care and toil ;

v. 461. *Quotiens bella non ineunt, non multum venatibus, plus per otium transigunt, dediti somno, ciboque. Fortissimus quisque ac bellicosissimus nihil agens, delegatâ do-*

And, on the humble partner of his bed,
 Devolved the labour that his leisure fed :
 His life's employment still to hunt and fight, 465
 Habit had made e'en danger his delight :
 No abstract thoughts, corrected and refined
 By study, floated in his vacant mind :
 No intellectual vision ever stole
 On his tired sense, or raised his groveling soul : 470
 When adverse seasons drove him to repose,
 Dull clouds of apathy around him rose ;
 Loll'd on his lazy couch from day to day,
 In irksome lassitude he dozing lay ;
 Found labour tire, and cold inaction pall,
 And felt his own blank vacancy in all : 475
 Hence, to relieve the painful void, he sought
 The intoxicating fume and nauseous draught ;

mus, et penatium, et agrorum curâ fœminis senibusque, et infirmissimo cuique ex familiâ, ipsi habent: mirâ diversitate naturæ, cum iidem homines sic ament inertiam, et oderint quietem. Tacit. de Mor. Germ. c. xv. See similar accounts of the native Americans. Robertson, B. iv.

v. 477. Diem noctemque continuare potando, nulli probrum. Tacit. ibid. c. xxii. See also Robertson, B. iv. p. 396; and the account of the nauseous and intoxicating beverage called Ava, so much esteemed by the inhabitants of the South Sea islands, in Cook's Voyages. The Germans drank beer, which Tacitus does not seem to have thought much better than this ava. Potui humor ex hordeo aut frumento, in quandam similitudinem vini corruptus. Ibid. c. xxiii.

From rotting berries, or fermented grain,
 Press'd the strong juices to disturb his brain ; 480
 Or, with the smoke of acrimonious leaves,
 His torpid mind of all its power bereaves ;
 Till drown'd each glimmering spark of reason lies,
 And each obtruding thought from stupor flies.

Then, when with poisonous fumes his spirits boil, 485
 Foul murder riots in domestic broil ;
 Confused his passions rush, with lawless fire,
 At all that moves his hatred or desire :
 Wasteful he squanders now his gather'd store ;
 And now, with rage insatiate, grasps at more ; 490
 Rashly commits his all upon a die,
 And stakes at last his life and liberty.

E'en in his soberer mood this passion reigns,
 And stimulates with pleasures and with pains :
 To wait, while toil the envied wealth acquires, 495
 His dull impatient spirit palls and tires ;

v. 485. *Crebræ, ut inter violeñtos, rixæ, raro conviciis, saepius cæde et vulneribus transiguntur.* Tacit. *ibid.*

v. 493. *Aleam (quod mirere) sobrii inter seria exercent, tantâ lucrandi perdendive temeritate, ut cum omnia defecerunt, extremo et novissimo jactu de libertate et de corpore contendant.* *Ibid. c. xxiv.* Tacitus need not have wondered at this passion, which arises from the same causes, as those which he assigns for their disposition to rapine and plunder. *Nec arare terram, aut expectare annum tam facile persuaseris, quam vocare hostes, et vulnera mereri: pigrum quinimo et iners videtur sudare adquirere quod possis sanguine parare.* *C. xiv.* The same wild passion for gaming is general among all tribes of the native Americans. See Robertson, *ibid. p. 395.*

But, glowing, vibrates with supreme delight,
When agonizing hopes and fears excite
His torpid nerves, and his cold heart inflame
With the quick changes of the doubtful game.

BOOK II. OF PASTURAGE.

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PROGRESS OF CIVIL SOCIETY.

IN every species of each living kind,
That walk on earth, or float upon the wind ;
That live conceal'd in subterraneous caves ;
Or swim in myriads through the briny waves ;
Progressive numbers without end increase,
While nature gives them safety, food, and ease :
Whence, through the whole the balance to sustain,
And in proportion'd bounds each race restrain,
Each stands opposed to some destructive power,
By nature form'd to slaughter and devour ;
And still, as each in greater numbers breeds,
More foes it finds, and more devourers feeds. . .

By wolves o'erpower'd the elk expiring lies ;
The lordly bull beneath the lion dies ;
The lurking tiger, with resistless force,
Springs on the bounding stag and prancing horse ;
Confederate jackalls hunt the timid doe ;
And dogs and foxes chase the nimble roe :

Aloft the eagle hovering in the air,
 Low in the grass espies the crouching hare ;—
 Sudden he downward cleaves the liquid way,
 Flaps his broad wings, and tears the trembling prey :
 Promiscuous death, through all the finny brood,
 Destroys the less to give the greater food :
 Their countless hosts no social right protects ;
 No mutual instinct in fond pairs connects ;—
 Unfelt the sweet delights of love, they breed ;
 And, undisgusted, on their offspring feed.

To fix and regulate this general plan,
 Arose o'er all the moderator man ;—
 At first, the enemy alike to all,
 He fled the strong, and made the feeble fall ;
 Till freer intercourse his soul refined,
 And artificial wants enlarged his mind ;
 Taught him affection's circle to extend,
 And be at once the tyrant and the friend.

As growing numbers claim'd increase of food,
 In smaller herds the cattle browsed the wood :
 The hunter's labours less productive grew,
 And pale-faced famine slowly rose to view ;
 Bidding each stream of social comfort flow
 In troubled tides of sympathetic woe.

Hence want inventive, and prospective thought,
 More certain sources of nutrition sought ;

Directed man his genius to employ
To guard and save, as well as to destroy ;
Bade him in wiles the youthful brood ensnare,
And train the captives with parental care ;
The sturdy spirit of the headstrong break ;
Restrain the restless, and entice the meek ;
Teach them familiar round his hut to feed ;
And for his use, to copulate and breed ;
Till, lured by ease, they wish no more to roam,
But feel, like man, the comforts of a home :—
Morning and evening wait the accustom'd guide
To lead them forth, where limpid waters glide ;
The opening glade or verdant hill, to show
Where sweetest grasses most abundant grow ;
And take the daily tribute of the food,
Which nature gave the mother for her brood ;
But which, perverted from its natural ends,
To man its grateful nutriment extends.

Cherish'd by time, the habit needful grows,
And mutual want e'en from indulgence flows :
What appetite alone at first desires,
When oft received, necessity requires ; 65
And what has oft been yielded, oft demands
Again the pressure of exacting hands :
For nature still her wealth redundant pours
Where waste evacuates, or want devours ; 70

Which, stopp'd with sudden check, inflating strains
The aching fibres, and distends the veins.

Thus the soft chains of social love embrace
Kind after kind, and spread from race to race :
The faithful dog, the natural friend of man, 75
The unequal federation first began ;
Aided the hunter in his savage toil,
And grateful took the refuse of the spoil ;
Watch'd round his head at sleep's unguarded hour,
And drove the hungry tiger from his bower; 80
In deeds of death and danger led the way,
And bled unconquer'd in the doubtful fray ;
Still fought, though wounded, by his master's side,
And, pleased to save him, grasp'd his prey, and died.
As more the bounds of social rights expand, 85
And peaceful herds submit to man's command ;
Still as a faithful minister, he shares
The shepherd's labours, and divides his cares ;
Prowls round the hill, or to the allotted plains,
The climbing goat, or wandering sheep, restrains ; 90
With nice discriminating nose, inhales
The passing odours in the tainted gales ;
The wolf's approach o'er distant mountains hears,
And clamorous barks, and points his listening ears ;
And nearer still as the fell savage howls, 95
Bristles his wavy back, and fierce defiance growls.

Protected thus, by those they lately fled,
The fleecy flocks content in safety fed ;
Their proud possessor tranquilly obey'd,
And, e'en when doom'd to die, around him play'd ;
Resign'd their lives unconscious to his will,
And knew no danger, while they felt no ill. 100

In refluent course the softening influence ran,
And into milder manners moulded man ;
For though he made the bleating mother mourn
Her helpless young, untimely from her torn ;
And oft, with slaughterous hands, relentless shed
The blood of those, whom oft his cares had fed ;
Yet still, as leisure freed his soul for thought,
His tranquil heart for milder pleasures sought :
Bright fancy roved, by observation led,
And steady reason grew, by memory fed :
With powers combined they o'er his passions stole,
And slowly bent the rigour of his soul ;
His sentiments with those of others join'd,
And tuned to sympathy his wayward mind.

Beneath the shady tree or pendent rock,
From day to day, as still he watch'd his flock ;

v. 103, &c. I am here supposing a temperate climate, as I do throughout this account of the general Rise and Progress of Society. The particular influence of climate will be treated of apart; and I shall then show that the northern shepherd, or herdsman, is a very different animal from that, of which I am here speaking.

He still beheld the glowing orb of light,
 At stated periods, sink in shades of night ;—
 Again, at stated periods, saw it rise
 And traverse o'er again the trackless skies ;
 Observed the changing moon, with milder ray,
 And healing dew, succeed the scorching day,
 'Midst stars unnumber'd, that slow-moving shed
 Their fainter radiance nightly o'er his head ;
 And felt the varying seasons of the year
 With gradual pace recede, and re-appear.
 Now soft advancing, in the bloom of spring,
 Around the roseate wreaths of health they fling ;
 While pleasures breathing in each genial gale,
 New deck the world, and all their sweets exhale :—
 Then, shrinking slowly from the chilling breeze,
 The falling leaves and wither'd herbs he sees ;
 While nature, left all desolate and bare,
 Pines in the rigour of the wintry air :
 With equal force, he finds their influence reign
 O'er all that wing the air, or walk the plain ;
 In all alike, sees rising spirits flow,
 As vernal gleams with genial fervours glow ;
 And all alike, in drooping sorrow bend,
 When wintry blasts arise, and rains descend.
 This endless chain of being, as he view'd,
 Dissolved in parts, but in the whole renew'd ;

100

125

130

135

140

And found the lights of heaven eternal roll,
Each in its given circle round the pole ;
Amazement all his faculties oppress'd
And labouring doubt sprung painful in his breast ;
Conjecture on conjecture vainly rose,
The vast and complex secrets to disclose ;
While fancy strain'd each power, to comprehend
The almighty cause, and undiscover'd end.
At length, with faint belief, his thoughts assign'd
The mighty work to some all-ruling mind ;
Whose power unbounded, and supreme control,
Moved every part, and fix'd the eternal whole.

But when he saw meridian daylight fade,
Sunk in the dim eclipse's sudden shade ;
When, unforeseen, the blackening tempest shrouds
The skies of summer in dark wintry clouds ;
When ponderous hailstones, mix'd with fire, descend,
And knurled oaks the blasting lightnings rend ;
When roaring winds and bursting thunders sound,
And struggling vapours shake the solid ground ;
When, from the burning mountain's rifted sides,
Vast molten torrents pour their blazing tides,
And whirl'd in eddies of sulphureous floods,
Appear, 'midst shiver'd rocks, the crackling woods ;
Fear shook his joints, and silent horror stole,
With meek submission, on his humbled soul :—

In storms and earthquakes, deluges and fire,
 He saw the Almighty Being's wasteful ire ;
 Conceived him fierce in wrath, to vengeance prone,
 And sway'd by passions lawless as his own ;
 Or vainly struggling with assailing foes,
 Who strove his righteous orders to oppose. 175

Hence, humbly contrite, all his soul adored
 The hostile demon, or offended lord :
 With gifts to mitigate his anger tried,
 Or soothe by flattery his injured pride : 180
 The tender firstlings of his flock he slew,
 And gave to Heaven its consecrated due ;
 Invoked the God his humble feast to share,
 While holy flames dispersed it in the air,
 And thought, as still the vapours seem'd to rise, 185
 The grateful Power inhaled them in the skies.

In sleep, when fancied visions of the night
 With mental images delude the sight,
 He thought he saw, in mortal form array'd,
 This mighty being to his sense display'd :— 190
 Awaked, the fleeting vision still he saw,
 And mark'd each lineament with pious awe ;
 Then strove, with rude design and infant art,
 In mimic form, its semblance to impart :
 With sharpen'd flint the features coarsely hew'd 195
 In the soft crumbling stone or mouldering wood ;

And bade rough trees in shape of limbs arise,
And gems and corals sparkle in the eyes ;
Rich plumes and furs the head and body deck,
And pearly bracelets dangle round the neck.

200

Confounded at the sight, the gaping crowd
Submissive to the grisly figure bow'd ;
With joy the likeness of their god received,
And still, as less they knew, the more believed :
Around his throne devoutly oft they pray'd,
Fancied he nodded, and his nod obey'd ;
And when the wind his plumes and bracelets shook,
Saw wrath disturb, or favour soothe, his look ;
But still discover'd pleasure in his eyes,
When lighted by the flames of sacrifice.

205

210

Gentle delusion, still to mortals kind !
Parent of hope, the cordial of the mind !
Whose future comforts over all distil
The healing balm, that cures all present ill ;
Whose charms the sage condemns, the wit derides,215
But each within his secret bosom hides ;—
Each hugs the pleasing fallacy unknown,
And laughs at every error, but his own.
Thy potent arts, in fancy's fetters, bind
The fierce and turbid passions of mankind ;220

215

220

v. 195. See the idols of the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands in Cook's Voyages, which seem to be of the most primitive kind.

Softly extend opinion's gentle reign,
 Where force and reason strive to rule in vain ;
 Bid the young warrior drop his vengeful steel,
 And to the aged priest submissive kneel ;
 Make avarice renounce its hopes of gain, 225
 Thy visionary blessings to obtain ;
 Absorb gross appetites and foul desires
 In the pure raptures of celestial fires ;
 Deck dowdy nature in ideal charms,
 And form a goddess for the lover's arms, 230
 Till, clasp'd, he feels the sweet illusions fly,
 And nought remain but stale mortality.

Soul of ideal joy ! without whose aid,
 Life were no better than an empty shade ;
 A worthless load, dragg'd by a lengthening chain 235
 Through intervals of lassitude and pain ;
 A moving puppet, going still its round,
 In torpid matter's solid trammels bound,
 Till thou impart'st the visionary ray,
 To cheer the dark uninteresting way : 240
 For only thou canst ope to mortal eyes
 The impenetrable secrets of the skies ;
 Disclose the realms of everlasting day,
 Where heavenly forms through bowers ambrosial stray ;
 Where neither heat nor cold the sense offends, 245
 Nor noxious damp exhales, nor cloud descends ;

But temperate spring, with gentle gales serene,
 Scatters eternal odours o'er the scene ;
 Bids flowers on flowers in endless fragrance blow,
 And fruits on fruits for ever ripening glow.

250

There, when approaching to his last retreat,
 Thou bid'st the wanderer rest his weary feet ;
 And show'st, when life just quivers in his eyes,
 Where endless pleasures to receive him rise.

O hadst thou still, with visions such as these,
 Remain'd content to comfort and to please !
 To strew with sweets the rugged paths of life,
 And lead to future peace from present strife ;
 To cheer the gloom of intellectual night
 With the pure rays of faith's ambiguous light ;
 And, through the magic-lantern of the mind,
 Display celestial glories to the blind !

255

260

But soon ambitious fraud and greedy pride
 Employ'd thee, as their engine and their guide ;
 By thy soft arts enslaved the willing soul,
 And humbled man to man's severe control.

265

With scorn the few, whom Heaven with sense endow'd,
 Look'd down, and laugh'd at the believing crowd ;
 But yet with secret satisfaction view'd
 Their prompt credulity itself delude :
 Observant of effects, they learn'd to join
 The real cause with the imagined sign ;

270

And, shrewdly guessing, gravely to pretend
To tell what fancied prodigies portend ;
Or, with more bold imposture, first invent
The sign, and then discover its intent ;
With secret impulse bid the statue nod,
And hail the assenting favour of the god ;
Observe what changes in the autumnal sky
Obscurely show'd the gathering tempest nigh,
And tell the listening crowd, that partial Heaven,
To them alone the intelligence had given ;
Or, if deceived, to boast the secret charm
Their skill had found, its vengeance to disarm.

Hence, as the chosen minister of fate,
Each sway'd the councils of his little state,
And to the admiring crowd appear'd more wise,
Through high authority's mysterious guise ;
While time, that high authority extends
With growing numbers of confederate friends,
Gives it stability and strength to stand,
On the firm lasting basis of command ;
And trust no more the fickle gales that guide
Uncertain favour's fluctuating tide :
For as the mountain river wider grows,
As with augmented streams it further flows ;

v. 285. Religious monarchies were established in the earliest stages of society, long before any others. See Robertson's Hist. of Amer. B. iv. p. 344.

So power moves onward with augmenting force,
As time extends, and space expands its course.

Thus superstition its inventor crown'd,
And man his equal as a master own'd ; 300
But with submission loose and undefined,
As fear benumb'd, or reason rouzed his mind.

Here, credulous and rash, the grovelling horde
Bend to his nod, and hang upon his word ;
There, as the elders' steady council sways, 305
The exalted chieftain governs or obeys.

His temper too, oft marks a nation's fate,
And moulds the fabric of an infant state.

If warm in youth his active spirits glow,
He leads to conquest, and attacks the foe ; 310
At once a priest, a king, and captain shines,
And daring violence with fraud combines.

But if his lukewarm blood, in languid tides,
Sluggish and cold, through veins half empty glides,
Caution and fear will o'er ambition reign, 315
And each bold impulse of his mind restrain :
Retired the prophet sits, and guides from far
The dangerous tempest of wide-wasting war ;
Bids hands profane conduct the bloody storm,
And what his god and he direct, perform ; 320
Views from the mountain, where he went to pray,
The toils and perils of the doubtful fray ;

And, if success ensues, asserts his claim
 To each reward of profit or of fame ;
 But, if the victory predicted fails,
 At want of faith and sacrifices rails.

325

Thus priests and princes, with confederate sway,
 Made the deluded multitude obey ;
 Confirm'd their power usurp'd with steady laws ;
 And bade ambition serve in order's cause ;
 Disarm'd the unruly passions of the throng ;
 And, while they did no right, endured no wrong.

330

Hence greater evils were by less subdued,
 And selfish fraud conspired to general good ;
 By the strong hand of power combined and led,
 The growing nation round its centre spread ;
 Made neighbouring tribes before their chieftains bend,
 And join, their rising empire to extend ;
 In war for plunder and dominion fought,
 And fame and profit, more than bloodshed, sought :
 Slow avarice on ambition learn'd to wait,
 And check'd the fury of vindictive hate ;
 Taught maddening conquest, what it gain'd to save,
 And make the slaughterous foe an useful slave ;
 To train the captive family to toil,
 And make them, for the victors, till the soil ;
 With sharpen'd sticks, dig up the bulbous root,
 And teach the juicy melon where to shoot ;

335

340

345

Break the hard sun-burn'd glebe, and sow the seed ;
 And clear away the unprofitable weed ;

350

Or, with the flinty axe's blunted stroke
 O'erthrow the aged fir, or knotted oak ;
 And patient, from its massive body, hew
 The ponderous plank, or scoop the light canoe.

Here, prejudice with prejudice to oppose,
 The steady principle of honour rose ;
 Strengthen'd opinion with a bolder guide,
 And fix'd its fabric on the base of pride.

355

The low condition of the humbled slave,
 More lofty feelings to the master gave ;
 Made him the more his own condition prize,
 And the poor labourer's abject lot despise ;
 Behold with pointed scorn, and deadly hate,
 Whate'er belong'd to his degraded state ;
 And every sentiment of union, strive
 Far from his own imperious breast to drive :

360

365

v. 359. It may be objected, that in some of the American tribes, the point of honour is carried to the most extravagant pitch, though they do not employ slaves ; but in all those the women are the most abject of slaves, purchased by their husbands, and employed in continual and severe labour. They all too know well what slavery is, and value themselves extremely upon their absolute freedom and independence ; from the sense of which arise their principles of honour. See Robertson's Hist. of Amer. B. iv. The ruder savages of New Holland, or New South Wales, seem to have no notion of honour, as they have none of personal dominion or subjection.

As fear first sunk the warrior to a slave,
 The freeman's highest boast was to be brave ;
 And, as the slave from pain to labour flies,
 The freeman's pride was tortures to despise ;—
 To bear, with torpid smiles and cold disdain,
 The direst agonies of lingering pain ;
 And, 'midst fierce eddies of devouring flame,
 To boast his past exploits and future fame.

370

The slave, when bent to absolute control,
 Soon lost the pride and vigour of his soul ;
 And reason's power, enfeebled by disgrace,
 To sordid appetite resign'd its place :
 Whence the free savage boasts his high disdain
 Alike of sensual pleasure, as of pain ;

380

v. 375. See Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments.

This excessive apathy of pride seems now to be peculiar to the savages of Africa and America. The milder inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, who have no slaves of either sex, have none of it ; and therefore never attempt to conceal or restrain their natural sensibility. Among the northern hordes, who over-ran the Roman empire, it appears to have been a powerful principle of moral action : and from them a certain degree of it has descended to their civilized posterity ; whence in the most polished nations of modern Europe, an affront, which, according to the laws of honour, can only be cancelled by blood, must, according to the same laws, be received with perfect calmness and composure ; all asperity of reply, or retort of invective, being in such cases deemed a sign of unmanly weakness and intemperance of mind. In the north of Europe, however, this suppressed anger only led to equal combat, as it does still ; but in Africa and America, as well as among the common people of Italy, it leads to assassination, which, in the latter country, is generally as much a matter of honour as duelling is in this.

Hides, or controls, his hatred and his love,
 And lets no passion his calm features move ;
 But when hell's fury in his bosom glows,
 Careless indifference in each gesture shows.

When thus the principle possess'd the mind,
 Fashion and circumstance its modes defined ;
 Fix'd the strong bounds of honour and disgrace,
 To guide the morals of each various race ;
 And as their habits, wants, or tastes required :—
 As faith, caprice, or interest inspired ;
 Raised in the soul the imaginary bourne,
 Mark'd with the signals of esteem and scorn.

385

390

The wretch, whose doom its last impression seals,
 No social joy or dawn of comfort feels ;
 Condemn'd in solitude his life to end
 Reproach'd and shunn'd by every former friend ;
 And e'en in misery's last retreat pursued,
 With scoffing hisses or with clamours rude :
 In vain from place to place he rambling flies
 From the keen glances of malignant eyes ;
 Unwearied malice, to its object true,
 Hunts the cold foil, and keeps him still in view ;
 Nor time nor distance can protect or save,
 Nor e'en the last sad refuge of the grave ;
 For, blasted still by every busy breath,
 His memory lives, to suffer after death.

395

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405

Hence the strong voice of censure and applause
 Rules with more force than magistrates and laws ;
 Bids the rash gamester unresisting pay,
 E'en with his liberty, his loss at play ;

Deceit in trifles, makes the perjured fear,
 And be, when false to Heaven, to man sincere ;
 Danger and death, and e'en religion braves ;
 And power, that's sanctified by Heaven, enslaves.

The Arabian plunderer, to slaughter bred, 415
 Nourish'd by pillage, and on rapine fed,
 At honour's call, the suppliant foe receives,
 Comforts his sorrows, and his wants relieves ;
 And though no pity ever touch'd his breast,
 Unbars his tent to succour the distress'd, 420
 And shares his garnient with his naked guest.

'Twas honour too, that oft, in days of yore,
 To the poor stranger oped the rich man's door ;

v. 409. This refinement of honour in paying debts of play, prevails among the rudest savages, who have learned to feel the pride of independence, and the manly dignity arising from it. *Victus (aleâ) voluntariam servitutem adit ; quamvis junior, quamvis robustior, alligari se ac venire patitur. Ea est in re pravâ pervicacia : ipsi fidem vocant.* Tacit. de M. G. c. xxiv. See accounts of the same passion carried to the same excess among the native Americans. Charlevoix, N. Fr. iii. p. 261, 318.

v. 415. There is no animal in a human shape so totally devoid of the milk of human kindness, as the wandering Arab of the Desert ; yet to those whom his laws of honour entitle to the rights of hospitality, he is kind, generous, and faithful, in the extreme ; of which instances are related by almost every traveller who has written of that country.

Made guiltless poverty a claim to love,
And call'd the friendless here, the friends of Jove.

425

Yet honour oft has raised the petty feud,
Which friendship's hand in kindred blood embrued ;
From trifling causes kindled deadly strife,
And stain'd with dire remorse the virtuous life ;
Bedew'd with widow'd tears the bridal bed,

430

And to untimely sorrows bow'd the orphan's head.

Yet e'en when thus abused, its power restrains
O'erbearing force, and headstrong passion reins :
Makes the rude voice of insolence polite,
And gives to modest virtue, virtue's right ;
Preserves to rank its due respect of place,
And decks obedience with fair freedom's grace ;
Softens the rigour of the despot's pride,
And teaches servitude its chains to hide ;
While vanity, by empty titles caught,

440

Thinks itself honour'd while 'tis only bought :—

But bought by that, which leaves no moral stains,
Nor with corruption damns the prize it gains ;
For honour can its votaries' frailties hide,
And shelter virtue with the shield of pride.

445

v. 422. ————— πέντε γυαῖς Δῖος; εἰσιν ἀπειπτεῖς,

Ζεύσις τε πτωχοῖς τε δοῖς; δ' οὐρανη τε φιλη τε. Od. 2. 208; et Ε. 58. The duties of hospitality in Homer, are derived partly from a principle of religion, and partly from a point of honour.

O, may the useful folly still endure,
 Nor ask from reason a fallacious cure !
 Still may we value its unreal prize,
 Nor learn of silly sophists to be wise !
 For still delusion must support the plan
 Of social union, which it first began ;—
 If abstract reason only rules the mind,
 In sordid selfishness it lives confined ;
 Moves in one vortex, separate and alone,
 And feels no other interests than its own.

450

455

As every swelling breeze, or passing gale
 Empowers the vessel to some point to sail ;
 And, while the helm obeys the pilot's skill,
 Oft indirectly moves it to his will ;
 So every selfish passion may produce
 Some impulse, which may tend to general use ;
 And, if by legislators understood,
 Be made the instrument of moral good.
 E'en vanity, the frothy scum of pride,
 May thus the wavering soul to virtue guide ;
 Make sordid interest yield to tinsel fame,
 And take, for solid gain, an empty name.

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BOOK III. OF AGRICULTURE.

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The increasing numbers of domesticated animals require more extensive pastures, and excite attempts to clear away the woods, 1—6; which are attended with insurmountable difficulties till accident shows the means of doing it by fire, 7—12, which was then employed, 13—20; and which discovers metals, 22—24, silver, gold, tin, and brass, 25—28; and the means of smelting and fashioning them into implements of agriculture and war, 29—36. Iron last discovered, 37—42; and gradually rendered malleable, 43—46. The general effect of the discovery in facilitating labour, and extending the dominion of man, 47—50. He compels the domesticated animals to work, 51—58; and becomes an agricultor and planter, 59—68; whence the natural powers of vegetation are augmented and improved, 69—76; and even the atmosphere tempered and softened, 77—90. His own faculties also expand, and society becomes more liberal, 91—100, and pleasure more refined, 101—104, particularly that arising from the intercourse of the sexes, 105—114; which to be perfect must be free, 115—159. Marriage being indissoluble, the cause of its being seldom happy, 160—167. In this stage of society the first refinements of love produced poetry, 168—189; the savages' war songs not deserving that name, 190—197. True poetry only produced by leisure and observation, 198—203. Its first subject love, 204—236: then war and religion, 237—242. Prophecy, 243—250. Hymns of Orpheus, 251—258. Epic and moral subjects, 259—262. Works and days, or ethic and economical poem of Hesiod, 263—266. The Odyssee, 267—268. The Iliad, 269—280. The Muses led by Apollo, or the sun, 281—292. Poetical personifications and allegories, 293—308; their influence on imitative art, 309—326, and moral happiness, 327—338; fabulous poetry preferable to frigid sophistry, 339—346. Homer, 347—348. Hesiod, 349—350. Virgil, 351—354. Satirists and anonymous libellers and critics, 355—372: their apology, and real effects on good and bad writers, 373—394. Instance of Gray, 395—416. The author's apology for writing upon a subject, which he began and relinquished, 417—426. Philosophical or didactic poetry only suited to the present times; fiction having lost all its powers, 427—484. The author's qualifications for what he has undertaken, 485—516; and the merits and defects of the language and metre, which he is obliged to employ, 517—536.



PROGRESS OF CIVIL SOCIETY.

As o'er the earth the growing race of man,
With social influence still extending, ran,
More numerous herds required increase of food,
And bade him thin the o'ershadowing wilds of wood :
Whence oft, with blunted tools of stone, he strove
The ponderous trunks and earth-bound roots to move.

5

But fix'd, by time, firm in their native soil,
They baffled all his rude unskilful toil ;
Till dry conflicting boughs together driven,
Or the electric flash of fire from heaven,
The inflammable autumnal woods had caught,
And swifter means of sure destruction taught.

10

Then spreading fires to clear the ground were raised,
And far around the crackling forests blazed :
In clouds of smoke, the rolling torrent pours
From hill to hill, and every tree devours ;
With hollow roar before the tempest flies,
While bursting flames and sparkling cinders rise,

15

H

And spread the glare of horror and affright
Through the still darkness of the sable night.

20

Oft on the mountain's side, where piles of wood,
With fires accumulated, blazing stood,
The bare parch'd earth beneath their fury glow'd,
And melted ores from heated fissures flow'd.

Then, cast in nature's rude unfashion'd mould,
Beam'd the pale silver and the glittering gold ;
Swift ran the ductile tin ; and streams of brass
Roll'd slowly, curdling in a rugged mass.

25

From the rude models copying, man acquires
The use of fashion'd moulds and smelting fires ;
Shapes the well-temper'd clay with plastic hand,
And makes the metal flow at his command ;
Draws out the implement of war and toil ;
The means of produce, or the means of spoil ;
The axe to fell the tree, the crooked hoe
To till the ground, and spear to pierce the foe.

30

Still one invention to another leads,
And art to art, in order slow, succeeds :
As various metals variously were wrought,
Others were found, and into usage brought :
Those who had learn'd the copper to refine,
Next drew the hidden iron from the mine ;
In stubborn lumps at first, and masses cast,
By slow degrees to ductile bars it pass'd ;

35

40

Softn'd its rigour, and no longer broke 45
 Beneath the ponderous hammer's plastic stroke.

Thus more effective implements were found
 To raise the building, and to till the ground ;
 Labour by art was methodized and fed ;
 And man's dominion over nature spread. 50

Slaves of all kinds he fashion'd, to obey
 His will, and tamely toil beneath his sway :
 The horse he bridled, and his back bestrode ;
 And taught the ass to bear the unwelcome load :
 The lordly bull's imperious spirit broke, 55
 And bent his neck beneath the galling yoke ;
 Loaded the patient camel, as he kneel'd ;
 And forced the mighty elephant to yield.

With rude design, he join'd the crooked bough,
 And pointed beam, to form the rugged plough ; 60
 And made the beasts, he tamed, submissive toil
 To trace the furrow, and to turn the soil ;
 To break the matted turf, and sink around
 The limitary ditch, and raise the mound :
 O'er the hard clods the wattled crate he leads, 65
 And strews the labour'd ground with chosen seeds ;
 Selects for culture each nutritious root,
 And, from the parent's shade, transplants the vernal shoot.

Thus train'd by fostering toil, each various kind
 More various spreads, and rises more refined : 70

Grains more abundant swell the yellow ear,
 And richer fruits the trees in autumn bear ;
 With brighter bloom the vernal flowerets shine,
 And heavier clusters load the mantling vine ;
 A deeper verdure overspreads the vales, 75
 And sweeter odours scent the southern gales :
 For e'en the elements to culture yield,
 And catch the mellow'd temper of the field ;
 Melt with the glance, which Heaven on nature smiled,
 While pleased she dallied with her fostering child, 80
 And join concordant in the general plan,
 Which bends the world beneath the power of man.
 Hence milder airs from peopled regions rise,
 And earth returns their blessings to the skies ;
 Bids softer breezes o'er rich tillage blow, 85
 And warmer vapours melt the drifted snow ;
 Less black the tempests from the mountain scowl,
 And winds less furious from the ocean howl ;
 In lighter showers descend the vernal rain,
 And numbing frosts with power less rigid reign. 90
 From toil released,—exalted by command,
 Man feels his faculties of mind expand ;

v. 77. See Note xxx. to Vol. I. of Robertson's Hist. of America. To the ingenious observations there made, it may be added, that cultivation and manure excite fermentation in the soil, which warms the currents of air which pass over it.

His simple notions into science spread,
 And reason grow, by observation fed ;
 Thoughts more enlarged his active soul inspire, 95
 And blunt each selfish impulse of desire ;
 In gentler ties the social union bind,
 And tune the heart to passions more refined ;
 The chains of sympathy still more extend,—
 Interest to interest join, and friend to friend. 100

Lull'd in the lap of plenty and of ease,
 He sought for pleasure, and he learn'd to please ;
 Each sensual joy with social bliss combined,
 And appetite, with intellect, refined.

Bliss then he found, which force could never gain, 105
 Which wealth, which fame, and power pursue in vain ;
 Which loves reciprocal alone bestow,
 And equal wants and wishes only know ;
 Which often flies the guarded couch of state,
 To court the welcome of the peasant's gate ; 110
 Where toil of weariness it oft beguiles,
 And decks distress and poverty in smiles ;
 Lulls in soft sleep the care-distracted head,
 And strews with driven down the hard uneasy bed.

The brothel's victim and the haram's slave 115
 May give what brutish appetite may crave ;
 Yield all the purchaser's or master's right,
 In cold, obedient, counterfeit delight ;

Act o'er her gambols, and display her charms ;

Hang on his lip, and revel in his arms :—

120

But still, through all, the heart's deep sorrows rise,

Check the forced laugh, and cloud the leering eyes ;

Beneath the borrow'd bloom, the cheek pervade,

And bid the rosy lip untimely fade ;

Pall with cold thoughts the harbinger of joy,

125

And make the glowing kiss's nectar cloy :—

In vain the fond caress, and wanton wile,

The inward feelings of the soul beguile ;

In vain to strains of bliss she tunes her throat,

And warbles to the lute's lascivious note ;

130

Cold melancholy mocks each thin disguise,

And dims each pleasure in its sable dyes.

But the keen ecstasy and mutual glow,

That from congenial minds and spirits flow ;

Pleasure's light frolic, and the wanton toy,

135

That opes the mind, and tunes the nerves to joy ;

The soul's dear sympathies, that guide the sense,

And through each fibre keen delight dispense :

The thrilling rapture of the enamour'd heart,

That scorns the assistance or restraint of art ;

140

The glance electric of the languid eye,

The panting bosom, and the tender sigh,

No earthly power can force, nor treasure buy :—

From souls by nature join'd they spring alone,
And know no other motives than their own.

145

Bless'd days of youth, of liberty, and love !

How short, alas, your transient pleasures prove !

Just as we think the sweet delights our own,

We strive to fix them, and we find them flown :—

For fix'd by laws, and limited by rules,

150

Affection stagnates and love's fervour cools ;

Shrinks like the gather'd flower, which, when possess'd,

Droops in the hand, or withers on the breast ;

Feels all its native bloom and fragrance fly,

And death's pale shadows cloud its purple dye.

155

While mutual wishes form love's only vows,

By mutual interests nursed, the union grows ;

Respectful fear its rising power maintains,

And both preserve, when each may break, its chains.

But when in bands indissoluble join'd,

160

Securely torpid sleeps the sated mind ;

No anxious hopes or fears arise, to move

The flagging wings, or stir the fires of love :

Benumb'd, the soul's best energies repose,

And life in dull unvaried torpor flows ;

165

v. 150. Let me not be supposed to mean a condemnation of marriage ; from which I have derived all the blessings and benefits of Civil Society ; but merely of its indissolubility. There are many causes which ought to justify divorce, as well as that of adultery on the part of the woman ; and I think it probable, that if other causes were admitted, this would be less frequent. Divorce is, I believe, as often the object, as the consequence, of adultery.

Or only shakes off lethargy, to tease
Whom once its only pleasure was to please.

Ere yet this curse had fallen on mankind,
And one to one inseparably join'd ;
When, if changed tempers made affections cease, 170
The power that join'd them could again release ;
When vows, because they bent, were seldom broke,
And love, which made, maintain'd the marriage yoke ;
When social manners, simple yet refined,
Had smooth'd and soften'd, not unnerved, the mind ; 175
When all its savage energy remain'd,
Strong and unbroke, though mellow'd and restrain'd ;
From thought refined by sentiment, began
Sweet Poetry, the choicest gift of Heaven to man :
Sweet Poetry, of Love and Fancy born, 180
The shades of life to soften and adorn !
Eternal source of intellectual joy,
Whose charms for ever bloom, and never cloy ;
Parent and friend of every liberal art,
That charms the sense, or gratifies the heart ! 185

By love instructed, first the shepherd found
The soothing sympathies of sense and sound ;
Learn'd his soft sighs in numbers to exhale,
And tuned to melody his artless tale :
For though the savage oft, in quest of blood, 190
Had howl'd his war song through the echoing wood ;

And oft to measured sounds had learn'd to advance,
 In the rude mazes of the mimic dance ;
 Yet no rich images, by fancy dress'd,
 Or pleasing sentiments, the song express'd :
 In strains of death alone its frenzy rose,
 And only breathed defiance to his foes :
 But the fond shepherd, as his eye survey'd
 The peaceful world, in pleasure's charms array'd,
 And felt, as nature bade the seasons roll,
 Still brightening visions dawn upon his soul ;
 At leisure generalized each rising thought,
 And memory's forms with fancy's colours wrought ;
 And, as his soul's first passion still was love,
 With every grace to please its object strove ;
 And every winning artifice display'd,
 To melt the dear, capricious, wanton maid.

Now, plaintive song and music's charms he tried,
 And wept in cadence, and in metre sigh'd ;—
 In numbers taught his soothing tale to flow,
 And rich in fancy's imagery glow ;
 Till, by the thrilling melody inspired,
 She feels her breast with equal rapture fired ;
 Unconscious sinks in sympathetic trance,
 Yields sigh for sigh, and mingles glance with glance ;
 And, as love's visions in her fancy rise,
 Blushes assent, and silently complies.

195

200

205

210

215

Haste, haste, ye Graces, the loose zone untie,
 And yield her beauties to his ravish'd eye ;
 But hide the blush, which o'er each dimple steals, 220
 While you display what virgin shame conceals ;
 Hide it with kisses of the wanton boy,
 Whose soul now floats on the full tide of joy ;
 Yet sinks in trances, as he trembling sips
 The dewy nectar of her rosy lips.— 225
 Ah yet !—ah yet !—ye fleeting moments, stay,
 With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay !
 Let earth bestrew their bridal bed with flowers ;
 Above let heaven entwine ambrosial bowers ;
 And lightly round them dance the laughing Hours ! 230
 Then reign, ye monarchs, who with scepter'd pride,
 On victory's wings, o'er prostrate nations ride ;
 Yours be the dangers, toils, and cares of state,
 With all the trophies of revenge and hate !—
 Let happier wreaths adorn the poet's bower, 235
 Than e'er can grace the blood-stain'd car of power.
 Thus, rouzed by love, aspiring genius sprang
 To loftier themes, and deeds of valour sang ;
 With daring wing approach'd the bless'd abodes
 Of sainted heroes and immortal gods ; 240
 And as with bolder touch it struck the lyre,
 Waked all its harmony to songs of fire.
 Then, too, it graced the prophet's mystic spell,

And taught ambiguous numbers to foretell,
 In Delphic oracles, or Runic rhymes,
 The dire events decreed to future times ;
 Diffused aspiring hope, or chilling fear,
 And bade contending kings submissive hear ;
 Saw warring nations bend before its nod,
 And wait the dictates of the inspiring god.

245

250

Oft, too, in hallow'd strains, it strove to raise
 Its sacred voice to sing its Author's praise ;
 On seraph's wings bade rising fancy soar,
 And Heaven's eternal attributes explore ;
 Unbar to mortal man's imperfect sight
 The blissful realms of intellectual light ;
 Exalt his nature, and his soul refine
 With purer fires, and energies divine.

255

The poet thus, with heavenly science fraught,
 To listening nations wisdom's lessons taught ;
 To life and manners modified his song,
 And mark'd the bounds of moral right and wrong ;
 To wealth, esteem, and honour traced the way,
 And show'd where virtue and contentment lay ;

260

v. 251. See *Orphic Hymns, &c.*

v. 263. See the moral and economical Poem of Hesiod ; the only genuine work extant of that poet. The best edition of it is in Mr. Brunck's collection of the *Poetæ Gnomici* ; he having purified it of most of the spurious lines.

Exposed corruption in its secret springs, 265
 And smote dishonour on the thrones of kings ;
 Each milder duty praised of private life,
 In the fond husband and obedient wife ;
 Or else display'd, where war and slaughter raged,
 Brave heroes in their country's cause engaged ; 270
 Taught the rough verse to sound, in loud alarms,
 The shouts of battles, and the crash of arms ;
 Now with the gathering tumult's fire to glow,
 Clang shield on shield, and echo blow to blow ;
 And now, with plaintive melody, relate 275
 The wailing widow's tears, and hapless orphan's fate ;
 Pass'd deeds of old renown to bring to view,
 Perpetuate fame, and glory's blaze renew,
 And with historic accuracy, trace
 The growing greatness of each warlike race. 280

Hence Greece her Muses into being brought,
 The daughters feign'd of Memory and Thought ;
 Inspiring goddesses of genial song,
 To whom all arts that polish life belong ;
 Who, led by heaven's eternal orb of light, 285
 Each dormant spark of mental fire excite ;
 And as their leader's beams, where'er they glow,
 Bid the numb'd seeds of life and motion grow ;

So wheresoe'er extends their soft control,
 Bright fancy's visions rouze the torpid soul ;
 Heaven breathes the fervid breath of life through all,
 And unform'd matter quickens at its call.

290

Did raging storms o'er ocean's bosom sweep ?
 'Twas angry Neptune smote the troubled deep :
 Did clouds condensed emit electric fire ?
 'Twas Jove's wide-wasting instrument of ire :
 Did crops luxuriant fertile fields adorn ?
 'Twas Ceres deck'd the vales with wavy corn ;
 Or Bacchus bade the high embowering vine,
 Loaded with clusters, round the elm entwine :
 But, if they perish'd by untimely blight,
 The Furies tainted the cold dews of night ;
 Or, if they fell beneath the waste of wars,
 'Twas the dire ravage of insatiate Mars.

295

300

Thus, as the muse-inspired poet sang,
 Each abstract cause to form substantial sprang ;
 Assumed a local dwelling, and a name,
 And rose to fancy in a human frame.

305

Hence mimic art presumed, with bold design,
 Nature's best works to embellish and refine ;
 In earthly moulds the soul's conceptions drew ;
 And raised immortal shapes to mortal view ;
 The attributes of Heaven in man combined,
 And stamp'd his image with his Maker's mind.

310

The front majestic of imperial Jove, 315
 Proclaim'd the ruler of the realms above :
 Wisdom's mild light, in modest force array'd,
 Beam'd in the image of his martial maid ;
 While keen sagacity and quickness shone
 In every feature of fair Maia's son ; 320
 Stout Hercules' vast limbs and spacious chest,
 Pure abstract strength personified express'd :
 Light pleasure's smiling grace and wanton mien,
 Play'd in the form of love's voluptuous queen ;
 While from her half-closed eyes beam'd rays of fire, 325
 And on her lips sprang sighs of young desire.
 Alike each attribute divine was shown,
 In stated forms and features of its own ;
 Presiding Genii watch'd o'er every hill,
 And Naiads rose in every limpid rill : 330
 Where'er the lonely wanderer chanced to rove,
 He found the immortal progeny of Jove :
 Diffused alike through ocean, earth, and air,
 Unnumber'd spirits heard his evening prayer ;
 And still, as slumber closed his weary eyes, 335
 Bade dreams of comfort in his fancy rise ;
 Whilst hovering round celestial forms appear'd
 Raised drooping hope, and sinking sorrow cheer'd.

v. 331. Τέτις γαρ μυριοι εισιν επι χρόνοι πελεύσασθαι.

Αθανάτοις Ζηνος, φυλάκεσσι θυητών ανθρώπων. HESIOD, ibid. See also Od. 2. 123.

Hail, happy errors of delusive thought !
Unreal visions, with true blessings fraught ; 340
Once more from heaven descend, to mortals kind,
And cast your magic spells around the mind ;
Film o'er the sight of speculative eyes,
Nor let us feel the curse, to be too wise !

Again, ye Muses, let your songs resound,
And the vain sophist's frigid cant confound ; 345
Again to rapture wake the lofty strains,
That once re-echoed o'er swift Meles' plains ;
Or, with less bright and animating glow,
Cheer'd wintry Ascra 'midst her wilds of snow ;
Or rose sedate, with calm and steady pride, 350
Where Mincius' streams in wandering eddies glide ;
And taught the ruthless sons of war and spoil,
To honour agriculture's useful toil.

But drive far hence that wrangling ribbald race,
That feed on faults, and flourish by disgrace ; 355

v. 348. Homer, according to the most general traditions, was born on the banks of the river Meles: he certainly was of Asia Minor, and probably of that part of it. See Wood's *Essay*.

v. 349. Hesiod says, that he came from Cumæ, in Æolia; but resided—

— αγχ' ἐλεκτωνος οἰκυρη ενι καμη,

Ασκη, χειμα κακη θερει αργαλεη, χδε ποτ' εσθλη.

Hesiod seems to have seen every thing through a dark, and Homer through a brilliant medium.

v. 351. Virgil's Georgics.

The spawn of malice, quicken'd in the slime
Of mawkish folly, spun to filmy rhyme.

Like maggots hatch'd in summer's noontide hour,
The filth, which gives them being, they devour ;

360

Write nonsense on the nonsense which they read,

Like famish'd rats that on each other feed ;

Crawl out like bugs, conceal'd in shades of night,

Unknown to all, but when they stink or bite ;

Till gorged at length, they in oblivion lie,

365

And, with the vermin that they fed on, die ;

Then other swarms from those that perish rise,

Buz, sting, and disappear, like summer flies :

Each with his folly feeds some scoffing brother,

And his again still generates another :—

370

Thus Pindars, Pasquins, sketchers, and reviewers,

Still rise in shops, to set in common sewers.

Ah ! why this vain and useless warfare wage ?

Why read at all what but engenders rage ?

Why not, unnoticed, let poor dullness rot,

375

And be, like you its enemies, forgot ?

'Tis vanity, not love of fame, that tries

On such poor dirty scaffolding to rise.

“ *What, shall we suffer then?*” they all exclaim,

“ *Each rhyming fool to bear a poet's name?*”

380

You suffer !—and can you, vain man, restrain

The feverous efflux of a rhyme-fed brain ?

Can you thus hope to make the madness cease,
By showing symptoms of the same disease ?

No :—by the public favour or neglect, 385

Alone is genius raised, or dullness check'd :

A nation's justice will do merit right,

Though partial critics rail, or monarchs slight ;

But your vain clamour, every dunce defies,

Though oft to silence it may doom the wise ; 390

Make timid merit shun the paths of fame,

Nor risk tranquillity to gain a name ;

For hardy folly braves what genius fears,

And those who merit, scorn the critic's sneers.

See, of Reviews and Baviads in despite, 395

Each month new swarms of Baviuses write ;

While Lloyd's light laugh, and Johnson's growl could lay,

In dumb repose, the genius of a Gray !

Too timid bard ! by feelings nice oppress'd,

He shrunk abash'd from envy's paltry jest ; 400

v. 395. The author of the Baviad is a man of real taste and talents ; which, I hope, he will employ, as he has promised, upon better subjects than the editors of newspapers, and their wretched manufacturers of poems and paragraphs.

Mr. Lloyd who wrote *the Actor*, and other trifling poems, published some burlesque parodies of some of Mr. Gray's Odes, which, added to some coarse sarcasms of Dr. Johnson, prevented him from writing any more. Lloyd and his works are now almost forgotten : and high as Johnson may stand as a moral writer, if he deprived English literature of the poem on Education and Government, of which Mr. Gray has left so exquisite a fragment, it owes him no obligation.

And, with fastidious modesty, resign'd
To learned trifles all his mighty mind.

O, would the Muse, who touch'd his lips with fire,
The distant follower of his fame inspire !
Complete, with happier auspices, the plan 405
Which he, in loftier strains of verse, began :
Till blasted by the critic's cold rebuke,
He broke his lyre, and poetry forsook ;
Silent withdrew, and quench'd, in Gothic lore,
A spirit born on eagle's wings to soar. 410

Fastidious taste and judgment too refined
Restrain'd the native vigour of his mind ;
Each small defect, augmented, made it feel ;
And, to avoid reproach, its powers conceal ;
Measure each fool's discernment by its own, 415
And dread the scoffer's sneer and pedant's frown.

Bold is the attempt to gain the dizzy height,
Which he but tried, and check'd his daring flight :
Yet have I drunk of those Pierian springs,
From which his rising genius plumed its wings ; 420
And though with weaker tone and fainter glow,
The humbler current of my verse may flow ;
Still equal truth shall guide its steady course,
And useful sense excuse its want of force ;
To general subjects still direct its aim, 425
Nor court the fashions of the day for fame.

Truth now is all the Muses have to boast,
 Since Fancy mourns her airy visions lost ;
 And fiction, stripp'd of every playful grace,
 To frigid sophistry resigns its place ;— 430
 To frigid sophistry, which breaks the spells,
 Beneath whose shade the magic power dwells ;
 And all its elevated flights confines,
 Low in the trammels of its critic lines ;
 Or cramps its vigour, and its fervour cools, 435
 In the dull torpor of unmeaning rules ;
 Till quite benumb'd, it now can only move,
 In scenes of private life, and hapless love ;
 Where tales on tales, through endless volumes flow,
 Stuff'd with the unmeaning cant of love and woe : 440
 O'er which fond sentimental damsels weep,
 Till, drown'd in sorrows,—they fall fast asleep.

But the bright visions, which in days of yore,
 Plum'd Fancy's wings, and taught the mind to soar,
 Are sunk for ever from the prying sight, 445
 Since touch'd by sophistry's cold blasting light.

No Genii now through seas of ether glide,
 To wing the breezes, or the tempests guide ;
 No thundering god the mountain's summit shrouds,
 In rolling eddies of sulphureous clouds ; 450

v. 449. See Iliad, Θ.

No playful Dryads cheer the lonely woods,
Or sportive Naiads float in crystal floods :
The world proceeds by cold mechanic laws,
And fools and sophists know alike their cause.

E'en the rude fables of our rugged climes, 455
The dark materials of old Runic rhymes,
Though nicely spun by cabalistic wit,
Each winding maze of modern creeds to fit,
Have now their fierce terrific charms resign'd,
Nor dare assail the unletter'd peasant's mind. 460
No more he sees the pale and wandering sprite
Glide through the silent horrors of the night ;
Nor hears the hoarse ill-boding goblin roar
Along the wintry torrent's troubled shore.

No demon now the enchanter's voice obeys, 465
To guard the forest, or the storm to raise ;
To bid false hopes foul deeds of blood excite,
Or panic fears turn conquering chiefs to flight.

No guardian angels now from heaven descend,
The Almighty's shield o'er virtue to extend ; 470
To heal the wounded, and protect the brave ;
And valour, press'd by mightier foes, to save.

v. 465. See Tasso Gierus. Cant. xiii. and ix.

v. 467. See Macbeth.

v. 468. See Tasso Gierus. Cant. xiii.

v. 469. Ibid. Cant. vii. Stanz. 80. and Cant. xi. Stanz. 75.

No fairies now, or dapper elves are seen,
 By fancy's eye, light-tripping o'er the green :
 No more on vehicles of thought they ride,
 The waking phantoms of the brain to guide ;
 Or, wafted on the moon's mysterious beams,
 Lead the light progeny of fleeting dreams:
 Thus, of ideal images bereft,
 The Muse's humbler task is only left,
 Dry fact and solid argument to strew
 With flowers refresh'd in Heliconian dew ;
 And the light flow of narrative to trace
 With just expression, and with easy grace.
 Such now is mine :—unskill'd, in verse, to climb
 The lofty summits of the great sublime,
 A safer, but more toilsome path I choose,
 Where pensive study courts a coy Muse :
 And though neglect my boyish years o'erspread,
 Nor early science dawning reason fed :
 Though no preceptor's care, or parent's love,
 To form and raise my infant genius, strove ;
 But long, abandon'd in the darksome way,
 Ungovern'd passions led my soul astray ;
 And still where pleasure laid the bait for wealth,
 Bought dear experience with the waste of health ;
 Consumed in riot, all that life adorn'd,
 For joys unrelish'd, shared with those I scorn'd.

475

480

485

490

495

Yet when exhausted spirits claim'd repose,
 Each milder spring of mental vigour rose ; 500
 Aspiring pride my soul to science led,
 And bade me seek at once its fountain head :—
 Its fountain head, whence Grecian genius pours,
 O'er the wide earth its everlasting stores ;
 And, in each deep and lucid current, shows 505
 How fancy, join'd with taste, corrected flows.

There as I heard the mighty Chian's song,
 Roll its vast tides of melody along,
 In rapture lost, upon the sounds I hung,
 And numbers flow'd spontaneous from my tongue. 510

Warm'd by the Theban lyric's glowing heat,
 My heart with wilder raptures learn'd to beat ;
 And, as my spirits kindled with his fire,
 My hand unconscious wander'd o'er the lyre ;
 Striking wild notes, which gradual study taught, 515
 To breathe the sentiment, and waft the thought.

Though, doom'd in untuned dialect to chime
 The jingling, harsh, but necessary rhyme,
 I toil in vain the melody to reach
 Of their harmonious elevated speech ; 520
 Yet oft the roughness of our northern words,
 Impressive sense and energy affords,

v. 507. Homer. See Hymn. Apoll. ver. 172 ; and Theocrit. Thalus. ver. 47.

And stamps, in sound less flowing and refined,
Each thought and image strongly on the mind.

Oft, too, the rhyme, with neat and pointed grace, 525
Fixes attention to its proper place ;
Directs with truer aim the shafts of wit,
And marks, with emphasis, the spot to hit ;
Bids it to sentiment its edge impart,
And guide the gleams of fancy to the heart. 530

But cold, in blank and unmark'd metre, flows
The turbid current of our measured prose ;
Unless when Shakspeare's genius breathes its fires,
And the brisk bustle of the stage inspires ;—
When glowing passions melt it into ease, 535
And strong expression gives it power to please.

v. 531. Dr. Johnson observed, that in blank verse, the language suffered more distortion, to keep it out of prose, than any inconvenience or limitation to be apprehended from the shackles and circumspection of rhyme. Boswell's Life, Vol. I. p. 584. This kind of distortion is the worst fault that poetry can have ; for if once the natural order and connection of the words is broken, and the idiom of the language violated, the lines appear manufactured, and lose all that character of enthusiasm and inspiration, without which they become cold and vapid, how sublime soever the ideas and images may be which they express.

BOOK IV. OF ARTS, MANUFACTURES, AND COMMERCE.

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PROGRESS OF CIVIL SOCIETY.

Rouzed by the Muse, inventive Genius broke
Dull indolence's spells, and habit's yoke ;
Traced fancy's images, and boldly sought
To realize the transient forms of thought ;
Grasp'd at the exalted visions which it view'd,
And innovation's restless lights pursued.

5

Each bright conception of the poet's brain,
Art's mimic hand endeavour'd to attain ;
The implements of toil with taste refined,
And use with pleasing elegance combined ;
In forms of nice proportion turn'd the vase,
And taught its varying lines to flow with grace ;
On the vast bowl bade sculptured figures breathe,
And mimic foliage round its handles wreath ;
Spread the light robe, and made each graceful fold
Wave its rich dyes inwrought with threads of gold.

10

15
But chiefly art display'd its early charms,
To decorate the warrior's shining arms ;

L 2

To raise the helmet and emboss the shield,
And make the breastplate glitter o'er the field ;
To stud, with burnish'd gold, the enamell'd hilt,
And, with terrific forms, adorn the embroider'd belt.

Then splendid structures slowly rose to view,
And fretted roofs on fluted columns grew ;
High o'er the slumbering monarch's stately bed, 25
The lofty canopy its awning spread :—
With gold and ivory deck'd, the regal throne
Through spacious halls and pillar'd porches shone :
The costly fanes, the toil of ages, raised ;
And high on sculptured gold the victims blazed ; 30
Rich incense breathed its fragrant odours round,
And music mingled the deep flow of sound :—
Of sound, which charms the sense, and lifts the soul
Above each turbid passion's rough control ;
Gives wings to thought, and bids devotion rise 35
Where fancy paints the glories of the skies.

In mimic shapes the molten metal ran,
And sculptured marble took the form of man ;
Rudely at first, but with intention true,
The infant hand of art its models drew ; 40
Strove but to trace, in lines exact and dry,
What simple nature placed before the eye ;
Nor e'er its works embellish'd, or debased,
With just refinements or false tricks of taste ;

Till, by the poet's heaven-born genius taught, 45
 The ideal grace of general forms it caught ;
 Diffused harmonic movement through the whole,
 And, in the body's gestures, mark'd the soul.

But long ere art this excellence display'd,
 Inventive need had made each art a trade ; 50
 Taught men each other's talents to employ,
 And class their labours jointly to enjoy.

As mutual wants and appetites required,
 What one rejected, others still desired ;
 And shares unequal, tended to arrange 55
 The just equality of just exchange.

One from rich fields his ample areas fill'd ;
 Another shone in art's nice labours skill'd ;
 One saw his herds o'er distant mountains graze ;
 Another neatly scoop'd the hollow vase : 60
 Some drew the shining metal from the mine,
 While others toil'd its masses to refine :
 One bent the scythe, another shaped the hoe,
 Pointed the sword, or join'd the useful plough.

Each found the produce of his toil exceed 65
 His own demands, of luxury or need ;
 Whence each the superfluity resign'd,
 More useful objects in return to find :
 Each freely gave what each too much possess'd,
 In equal plenty to enjoy the rest. 70

Hence the soft intercourse of commerce ran,
 From state to state, and spread from clan to clan ;
 Each link of social union tighter drew,
 And rose in vigour as it wider grew ;
 For still what farthest came was most esteem'd, 75
 As novelty and rareness merit seem'd ;
 Whence greedy traffic the bold merchant led
 Far as the sun its quickening influence shed ;
 Bade him through trackless seas, from shore to shore,
 The various products of each clime explore ; 80
 And teach remote and unknown tribes to share,
 What bounteous Heaven enabled each to spare.

Though selfish avarice was his only guide,
 Around him liberal plenty pour'd its tide ;
 Each path of life, with gayer pleasures strew'd, 85
 And bade the springs of evil flow with good :
 For as his rising wealth its charms display'd,
 In wanton luxury and proud parade,
 Swiftly through all the infectious passion spread,
 And active emulation rear'd its head : 90
 Aspiring pride with mean self-interest strove,
 Each source of nature's bounty to improve ;
 Bade friends with friends in keen contention vie,
 And toil and skill their joint endeavours try,
 To gain the means of pleasure and of ease ; 95
 And power extend with growing wealth's increase :

For such appear to all, when unpossess'd,
 Alone to make their proud possessor bless'd ;
 Till, once securely grasp'd, they pall and tire,
 And prove the bliss was all in the desire ;—
 Desire, which, sprung from nature or from art,
 Still moves the sentiments and warms the heart ;
 And, in the active heat with which it glows,
 The very blessing, that it seeks, bestows.

100

Down life's swift stream some bubble each pursues,
 Which shines remote in hope's delusive hues ;
 But which obtain'd, its eager follower finds
 Burst in his hands, and melt into the winds ;
 But others still in brighter forms he sees,
 Dance on the waves, and float before the breeze :—
 Again reviving hope his soul allures,
 Renews exertion, and success assures :—
 Pride swells his sails ;—the helm gay fancy steers ;—
 Faith dissipates his doubts, and calms his fears :—
 Bubble to bubble without end succeeds ;—

110

He plies his oars, nor toil nor danger heeds :—
 Still pointing onward to the imagined prize,
 Expectant pleasure present bliss supplies :—
 Onward he goes—till some unlook'd for wave
 Breaks o'er his bark, and sinks him in the grave.

115

The phantom happiness thus all pursue,
 Which still, though present, seems but just in view ;

120

Which, still progressive, with its follower flies,
 But when he stops to seize it, fades and dies.
 Yet still where'er it leads, its windings tend, 125
 Through ways discordant, to one general end ;
 For though each object of pursuit be vain,
 The means employ'd are universal gain.

Through various ways, as various talents press
 The general prize of riches to possess ; 130
 Though partial losses frustrate schemes deplore,
 All tend alike to swell the general store ;
 All fill the streams of industry and art,
 Which through the whole their vital powers impart ;
 And as one prospers, and another fails, 135
 Degrees are form'd, and order just prevails ;
 Obedience graduated softens rule,
 And passions, modified by interests, cool.
 The bigot's fears, and sly impostor's cheat,
 Before the slowly-rising light retreat ; 140
 And the stern rigours of supreme command,
 On the broad base of influence learn to stand.

As when the builder's art some pile would raise,
 To shine the wonder of succeeding days ;
 Beneath, rude blocks of stone compose the base ; 145
 Aloft, the entablature displays its grace ;
 While pillars and pilasters rise between,
 And marble walls and portals intervene :

So tier on tier, the social fabric grows,
 As balanced interests different parts dispose :
 Patience and toil its strong foundations spread,
 While lightly pleasure wantons round its head :
 Between, dependence to dependence clings,
 And union still from separation springs.

15●

As interests, thus connected and opposed,
 Their adverse claims in various ways disclosed ;—
 As more unequal blessings chequer'd life
 More copious rose the springs of private strife ;
 And still, as man o'er man in wealth aspired,
 More strong and complex laws his state required :—
 As more temptations still assail'd his mind,
 More of his native freedom he resign'd ;
 Ordain'd a force, to punish and control
 Offending parts, and regulate the whole ;—
 Councils and magistrates with power array'd,
 And for security and peace obey'd.

16○

Thus, from self-balanced rights, republics sprung,
 As parts to parts self-constituted hung ;
 More nicely poised, than when, with rule and line,
 Vain prescience passion's limits would define ;
 Or varying interest's boundless measures span,
 In the small compass of a pedant's plan.

165

By guardian laws protected and secured,
 Safety and gain collecting crowds allured ;

17○

And still, as life's enjoyments flow'd with ease, 175
 Nature enlarged her fountains of increase ;
 With compound powers augmented still their force ;
 And bade still heightening pleasures wing their course.

Hence the throng'd city spread its ample round,
 And raised its walls, with lofty turrets crown'd ; 180
 Learn'd, round one centre all its powers to blend,
 And with collected force its rule extend ;
 At once for commerce and for conquest fought,
 And private gain in public empire sought ;
 And though oppression oft disgraced its sway, 185
 And massacre, for plunder, mark'd the way ;
 Yet, in the ferment of contention bred,
 Each bright invention rear'd its infant head ;
 Science and art their various powers combined,
 To polish, charm, and elevate mankind. 190

And first o'er all the wonderous art arose,
 Sounds fraught with sense in symbols to enclose ;
 To fix articulation ; and, confined
 In lasting forms, reveal it to the mind ;
 To embody tones, as with the breath they fly, 195
 And show their airy currents to the eye ;
 Eternal bid the poet's numbers flow
 Wherever life's congenial spirits glow,
 And, wafted on the stream of vision, roll
 Rich tides of melody from pole to pole. 200

By letters plumed, see Genius waves its wings,
And o'er the earth its quickening radiance flings ;
Through space and time directs its endless flight,
And pours o'er all its intellectual light,
Which man's aspiring soul still upward leads, 205
Exalts with generous thoughts, and prompts to glorious deeds.

No more each age, within itself restrain'd,
Its little knowledge from its practice gain'd ;
Alike to all the past and future blind,
Or to tradition's glimmering rays confined ;
But with accumulated treasures fraught,
Each still improved on what another wrought ;
Built on foundations which were laid before,
And, with what others left, increased its store. 210

As soft vibrations run from string to string,
And metals, touch'd by sounding metals, ring ;
Or, as the electric fluid darts along
Through the closed numbers of the pressing throng ;
So, borne by letters, and by labour fed,
Science and art their rapid influence spread ;
In wider circles still diffuse their light,
And all the active powers of man excite.

And, as soft milky streams, with acids mix'd,
Are in coagulated masses fix'd,
Which, as their various qualities decide,
Or lightly float aloft, or low subside ; 225

So still, where arts the social system cheer,
 Discriminated ranks of life appear ;
 Mechanic labour sinks in dregs below ;
 Design above, and bright invention flow ;
 While, over all, luxurious pleasures dose
 In listless lethargy and tired repose.

But, as in mechanism, springs of steel,
 Or weights of lead, alike can turn the wheel ;
 And by their graduated powers, impart
 Its proper movement to each various part ;
 So in well-poized and complicated states,
 The separate classes act as springs and weights ;
 And each the movement of the whole connects,
 Its force condenses, separates, and directs ;
 Through channels multiplied, each tends to guide
 The unequal currents of the golden tide ;
 While still, as more dispersed it ebbs and flows,
 Enlarged in energy and substance grows :
 Each, too, conspires the complex knots to join
 That hold together interest's ductile line ;
 And, round one centre, subject to its law,
 Each individual's jarring passions draw.

For industry still works with more effect,
 Where different classes different works select ;
 And each to one peculiar task confined,
 Lets no extraneous thoughts distract his mind.

Thus, too, while each can only parts produce,
 Which other hands arrange and join for use,
 Mutual desires and wants the whole pervade,
 And rank to rank unite, and trade to trade. 255

Through all, this general system to uphold,
 Arose the attractive influence of gold ;
 And, on its pure unperishable ore,
 The general stamp and scale of value bore ; 260
 To arts and commerce gave a wider range,
 And loosed to all the freedom of exchange ;
 A general medium of conveyance found,
 And mark'd to industry its proper round ;
 Bent to itself each passion of the soul, 265
 And bade it round one moral centre roll ;—
 One moral centre, in whose orb unite
 The regulating springs of wrong and right ;
 And, in one wide-extended vortex, draw
 Religion, virtue, policy, and law. 270

For since allow'd, by general consent,
 Whate'er the world affords, to represent ;
 Lord o'er the whole the shining metal stands,
 And every fancied bliss of life commands :
 Bids prostrate crowds upon the ambitious wait, 275
 And for the proud prepares the chair of state ;
 Piles up for avarice the growing hoard,
 And spreads for gluttony the plenteous board ;

Lifts empty vanity with venal praise,
And puffs around it ostentation's blaze ; 280
Love's fond caress, to loathed disease, allure,
And beauty's bloom for lustful age procures ;
Bids valour's trophies on the coward shine,
And decks the knave with attributes divine :
Virtue's fair semblance still in all supplies, 285
And hides each vice beneath its gay disguise :—
But with it hides the deeply conscious stains,
That spread the secret pangs of mental pains ;
And o'er the outward gleams of pleasure, throw
The lowering clouds that spring from inward woe. 290
Where images of guilt remembrance brings,
Each transient thought with gather'd venom stings ;
While leisure and satiety prepare
Each suffering nerve, and lay the heart-strings bare.
But where, when every sensual pleasure fails, 295
Mere vacancy of intellect prevails,
The mind, with cold disgust, beholds around
The dreary gulph of ignorance profound ;
At its own torpid melancholy shrinks,
And, crush'd beneath the load of being, sinks :— 300
For though, when toil and busy cares oppress,
Man thinks that indolence alone can bless ;
And fancies every bliss, his nature knows,
In calm enjoyment and serene repose ;

Yet, let him once that happy state obtain, 305
 He sighs for business and for toil again ;
 Finds pleasure satiate, and inaction tire,
 And forced enjoyment mere disgust inspire.

Hence, where the gifts of fortune most abound,
 Tranquil content is still most rarely found ; 310
 From sated apathy the rich man flies,
 And each excess, that pleased the savage, tries ;
 Bears want, and toil, and pain, in hopes to find
 Something to move and stimulate the mind.

Now the wild riot of the maddening bowl, 315
 Dispels the listless languor of his soul ;
 Deludes him with false momentary joys,
 And drowns life's irksome lassitude in noise.

Now ruin marks the chances of the game,
 And anxious hopes and fears his breast inflame ; 320
 Time, peace, and health are sacrificed to gain,
 What, once posse-s'd, brings back disgust and pain.

Now furiously he drives the rapid race ;
 And now, with headlong rage, pursues the chase ;
 Encounters toil and danger for a prize 325
 Which e'en the meanest of his hinds despise.

The arts of want thus sated riches learn,
 And social joys to savage sports return ;
 But still without the vigorous nerves, that brace
 The savage hunter for the mountain chase ; 330

And void of all that energy of soul,
 Which springs uncheck'd by mortal man's control ;
 —The polish'd hunter—gamester—what you will,
 Is but a courtier or a lordling still ;
 The slave of habit ;—fashion's busy fool ;
 Whose feeble vices are indulged by rule.

335

As when in formal lines, exact and true,
 The pruner's scissars shear the ductile yew,
 Amused, its shape and symmetry we see,
 But seek in vain the likeness of a tree ;
 And while the artist's pleasing skill we trace,
 Lament the loss of every native grace :
 So when too strictly social habits bind
 The native vigour of the roving mind,
 Pleased, the well-ordered system we behold
 Its justly regulated parts unfold,
 But search in vain its complicated plan,
 To find the native semblance of a man ;
 And, 'midst the charms of equal rule, deplore
 The loss of graces art can ne'er restore.

340

345

350

In social trammels too severely train'd,
 Man finds each brighter faculty restrain'd,
 And every genuine spark of native fire,
 Dimm'd and compress'd in frigid rules, expire ;
 And as the tree, forbid aloft to shoot,
 Puts forth unfruitful scions from its root ;

355

So when each loftier passion of the breast,
 In order's bounds is rigidly repress'd,
 Mean lurking vices rise unseen below,
 And round the heart in baneful vigour grow ;
 O'erpower each sentiment of nobler kind,
 And sink, in sordid selfishness, the mind :—
 His destined round each individual goes,
 Fix'd in the limits that his class dispose ;
 Traffic and trick his only means of fame,
 And wealth's dull vanity his only aim.

360

365

Such are the swarms, which China's fertile soil
 Maintains in slothful ease, or abject toil :—
 Myriads on myriads without end succeed,
 And only live to propagate and feed :—
 Like gossamers, the beings of a day,
 They spin life's little threads, and pass away ;
 Content to know just what they see and hear,
 And move, as led by hope, or urged by fear :
 Whate'er his rank, each slave is still the same,
 And only differs in his dress and name :—
 Merchants or mandarines—alike they go,
 Led by a bribe, or driven by a blow.

370

375

Bless'd medium ! still to art and genius kind,
 Where social ranks are mark'd, but not confined ;
 Where taste and accident professions fix,
 And talents all degrees and orders mix ;

380

Where merit still, its own reward may claim,
And excellence alone conduct to fame ;

Where laws secure the acquired means of life,
Nor yet suppress each rising germ of strife ;
But leave some social rights still undefined,

To stimulate the forces of the mind ;
To rouze its torpor in the keen debate,

And wake its calm repose with gusts of hate ;
For jealous hate, that emulation breeds,

The efforts of the mind still upward leads ;
Bids genius against genius rising soar,
And e'en perfection aim at something more.

Such was the spirit, which to deathless fame
Consign'd the glories of the Grecian name ;
And, 'midst wild tumults and intestine jars,
And all the atrocious mockeries of wars ;
Bade every high-aspiring bosom raise
Its daring claims to everlasting praise ;
And every art its object still pursue,
As nature oped her boundless charms to view.

By no dull methods cramp'd, or rules confined,
Each effort bore the impression of the mind ;—
Warm from the fancy, that conceived it, flow'd,
And, stamp'd with nature's genuine image, glow'd.

Alike the poet sung and sculptor wrought,—
Each sound breathed sentiment, each figure thought ;

385

390

395

400

405

Beauty, and grace, and easy motion shone,
 In forms of ductile brass or fragile stone ;
 And each expressive feature learn'd to impart,
 Back to the eye, the impressions of the heart.

410

The tinsel glare, which pride and folly prized,
 The Greek's just taste and manly sense despised ;
 With scorn beheld the unactive Mede enfold,
 His languid limbs in silks inwrought with gold ;
 And Egypt's sons, in frigid method bound,
 Still onward move their dull mechanic round ;
 Race after race arise, and pass away ;—

415

Unvaried live, and uniform decay ;
 Each class its destined task alone pursue,
 Content to learn just what their fathers knew :—
 Rank within rank hereditary pent,
 In peaceful drudgery still onward went ;—

420

Drawl'd on through life, as mystic priestcraft taught ;
 And, only as directed, moved and thought ;—
 Through ages toil'd vast fabrics to produce,
 Alike devoid of elegance or use ;
 Enormous piles, where labour, wealth, and waste,
 Strove to supply the want of sense and taste ;
 Where barbarous strength perpetuated shame,
 And sumptuous folly damn'd to endless fame.

425

430

v. 421. The Egyptians were divided into casts, like the Hindoos ; and not only rank, but all trades and professions were hereditary. See Herodot. L. ii.

Hence rose the pyramids, whose senseless pride
 Served but some tyrant's loathed remains to hide ;
 And the vast labyrinth its chambers spread, 435
 Useless to all ;—the living or the dead ;
 In sculptured granite, monstrous figures grew,
 And shapes, unknown to nature, rose to view ;
 The mystic symbols of a gloomy creed,
 Which priests employ'd the gaping crowd to lead ; 440
 Which art, obedient to the rules they taught,
 With patient, dull, mechanic labour wrought ;—
 Feeble, yet harsh—without correctness dry,
 And still, though formal, void of symmetry.

Jealous and stern, the hierarch's hard control 445
 Palsied and crush'd all energy of soul ;
 Made genius, reason, fancy, all obey
 The rigid dictates of its gloomy sway,
 Nor dare beyond its narrow limits stray.

O, ever free let faith and fiction stand !— 450
 Truth cannot need, nor falsehood use, command :
 When temporal force would make opinion strong,
 Its interference only proves it wrong ;
 For still internal weakness is display'd,
 Whene'er it deigns to claim external aid. 455

Religion's lights, when loose and undefined,
 Expand the heart, and elevate the mind ;

Brighten the fancy, and the spirits raise,
 Exalt the artist's touch, and poet's lays ;
 With smiling hope the brow of anguish cheer, 460
 And dry up melancholy's silent tear ;
 Bring down from heaven bright visions of delight,
 And pour their glories on the fading sight ;
 Blunt the keen pangs of sorrow in distress,
 And ebbing life's last gasping struggles bless. 465

But, in dogmatic definitions bound,
 They only serve to puzzle and confound ;
 To awe the timid, and the weak enslave,
 And make the fool subservient to the knave :
 Reason itself becomes an useless tool, 470
 When bent by force, and modified by rule ;
 And every flower of fancy blasted dies,
 When tyrant laws direct it where to rise.

Child of mysterious hope and sacred awe,
 Faith, scorns the power of every human law ; 475
 Still spreads, where wild imagination leads,
 And on fantastic dreams and visions feeds :
 Power, that would guide, exalt, or check its flight, ~
 But turns to gloomy fire its brilliant light ;
 Bids every cheering gleam of hope withdraw, 480
 And chilling fear usurp the place of awe ;
 While all imagination's visions hide,
 Their glittering forms from sacerdotal pride ;

And sainted falsehood, stuff'd with holy lies,
Securely cheats in piety's disguise.

485

Each mode of faith, if rightly used, supplies
Sense to the weak, and virtue to the wise ;
For equally in each, the soul sincere,
With pure devotion may its God revere :
But each that to exclusive right pretends,
Damns its own doctrines, and perverts its ends.

490

True wisdom still, by modest doubt is shown,
And ne'er decides what never can be known ;
While hardy ignorance, and foolish pride,
Nothing perceive, but every thing decide.

495

Mysterious questions, which from age to age
Have still perplex'd the science of the sage,
Explain'd in legal forms, are now received,
And if not understood, at least believed :—
Civic exclusion every doubt confounds,
And privilege the orthodox surrounds.

500

Is it then thus, presumptuous meddling man,
Thou darest the Almighty's secret will to scan ?
Has God to thee his high behests reveal'd,
Or bid thy arm his bolt of anger wield ?
Vain thought !—thy wisdom rather shouldst thou prove,
By equal charity, and general love ;
By humble gratitude to bounteous Heaven,
If faith's more radiant lights to thee are given :

505

But from those radiant lights, still learn to know, 510
That fainter gleams, from the same source, may flow ;
That weaker minds may want a weaker creed,
As different bodies, different medicines, need ;
And that the All-wise, All-potent, and All-good,
Has that, which suited each, on each bestow'd. 515
Had he preferr'd one mode of faith alone,
The world, he form'd, no other could have known ;
For, subject still in all things to his will,
His works their Author's purpose must fulfil.

BOOK V. OF CLIMATE AND SOIL.

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PROGRESS OF CIVIL SOCIETY.

THE speechless myriads, that on earth abound,
And, far as light and heat extend, are found ;
Whether, aloft in air, their plumes they spread,
Or, with slow pace, the solid surface tread ;
Whether through subterraneous ways they creep,
Or float, unseen, amidst the briny deep ;
Whether they browse the wood, or crop the mead,
Or prowl for prey, and on each other feed ;
Observe the climates suited to each kind,
And live in certain latitudes confined ;
Nor ever dare beyond the bounds to roam,
Where nature fix'd to each its proper home.

Beneath the tropics only, tigers growl,
And bears, o'er snowy mountains only, prowl ;
Vast elephants through Indian forests stray,
And elks, through Lapland snows, explore their way ;
In Egypt's loam, beneath a torrid sky,
Conceal'd the tortoise and ichneumon lie :

Where tepid waves obey the southern breeze,
 Insatiate sharks, too daring swimmers seize ;
 But where dark winter's frosts surround the poles,
 The unnumber'd herrings throng in endless shoals :
 O'er Yemen's sands the ostrich lightly springs ;
 From Norway's cliffs the falcon spreads his wings,
 And as along the frozen beach he sails,
 'Midst icy islands views the spouting whales.

Each kind remains adherent to the place
 Which best preserves and propagates its race.

But man's wide rule, alike the torrid zone,
 And polar circles, are compell'd to own ;
 Here, with the thirsty lion, he commands
 The sterile wastes of Libya's burning sands ;
 And there, the snowy rocks and mountains shares,
 That hide, in icy caves, the solitary bears ;
 Parent and child of art, his power controls
 The sultry tropics, and the frozen poles ;
 Makes every soil and clime his food produce,
 And nature bend to artificial use.

Yet might conjecture boldly dare to trace,
 Up to its source, his widely scatter'd race,
 Nature first saw him into being rise,
 Beneath the glow of hot meridian skies,
 For there, spontaneously, her cares supplied
 Whate'er could best his nutriment provide :—

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There, in the rich luxuriance of the wood,
 She gave him, all he wanted, shade and food ;
 And there she form'd his limbs, unclothed, to bear,
 Through every season, the well-temper'd air.

45

There, too, the next gradations of his kind,
 The links that to the whole his species bind,
 Baboons and monkeys through the forests stray,
 And all his native beastliness display ;
 The high pretensions of his pride disgrace,
 In the unfinish'd models of his race ;
 And show God's image, sunk into the shape
 Of a malignant, treacherous, filthy ape.

50
55

But still, as into colder climes he roved,
 His body strengthen'd, and his mind improved :
 Where nature something to his wants denied,
 Genius and industry their efforts tried ;
 And, rouzed by pressing need from dull repose,
 His latent energy and vigour rose :
 Struck by necessity, invention wrought,
 And labour realized the works of thought :
 Each physical defect, when understood,
 Still proved the parent of some greater good.

60
65

Where chilling damps descended on his head,
 He scoop'd the cavern, or he raised the shed ;
 A dwelling suited to the climate made,
 And the first dawn of infant skill display'd.

70

Where sudden torrents, swell'd with annual rains,
 Pour'd their swift deluges o'er level plains,
 As oft he saw the floating plank, or beam,
 Move with the winds, while gliding down the stream,
 Conclusions just his observation drew, 75
 And show'd the structure of the light canoe ;
 Taught him to ply the oar, and spread the sail,
 And stem the tide before the rising gale ;
 Till, bolder grown, he ventured by degrees,
 To launch his fragile bark upon the seas ; 80
 Cautiously steer'd along the beaten shore,
 The adjoining coast to pillage or explore ;
 Or, with his baited hook, to troul the flood,
 And rob the waters of their scaly brood.

But still, where fertile fields, with large increase, 85
 Supplied the means of luxury and ease,
 He shunn'd the dangerous element, and chose
 The means of plenty, join'd to safe repose :
 Rich clustering vines, from tree to tree he spread ;
 And flocks and herds on verdant pastures fed ; 90
 Manured the fallows, and prepared the field,
 Abundant harvests still increased to yield ;
 Along the hillock's side the furrow drew,
 And bade the stream, slow-gurgling on, pursue,
 O'er the parch'd soil prolific moisture spread, 95
 And raise each wither'd floweret's drooping head.

Such were the arts, which fed the unnumber'd hosts,
 That swarm'd o'er Egypt's and Assyria's coasts ;
 Such, too, Sicilia's ample granaries stored,
 And o'er rich India's realms abundance pour'd, 100
 Strew'd fat Boeotia's foggy fields with grain,
 And deck'd, with fragrant flowers, Thessalia's watery plain.

But where Phœnicia's barren mountains rise,
 And Attica's white rocks reflect the skies ;
 Where Crete's high hills their craggy summits rear, 105
 And Lipari's cliffs, with sulphur, brown appear ;
 The rugged strata of the hungry soil,
 Still baffled all the patient planter's toil ;
 Whilst a mild climate and salubrious air,
 Bade health and pleasure all his senses cheer ; 110
 And the warm influence of a genial sky,
 Urged every race to breed and multiply.

Whence famine soon, their growing numbers, drove
 O'er the wide waves, in quest of food, to rove ;
 Taught them to spread their sails, and ply their oars, 115
 And seek the produce of more fertile shores ;
 With sudden force the natives' hoards invade,
 Or gain them by exchange and mutual trade ;
 Display the produce of their skill, and try
 To lure the fancy, or attract the eye ; 120
 And make the peasant his rich stores resign,
 In tinsel ornaments of dress to shine.

For still the ignorant and vain admire,
 In every state, the splendour of attire ;
 The painted savage and the gilded beau,
 On the same principle, its influence show ;
 Each seeks alike his vacancy to hide,
 In the light glitter of unmeaning pride,
 And for distinctions, which he can't possess,
 To shine, at least, distinguish'd by his dress ;
 Hence vanity, to art became the guide,
 And natural evil, moral good, supplied.

125

130

When first his sails the adventurous merchant spread,
 From natural want and penury he fled ;
 Till soon, by unexpected profits taught,
 The means of power and luxury he sought ;
 Bade patient industry and skill combine,
 All nature's works to polish and refine ;
 To teach the wool to drink the purple dye,
 And with the violet's native colours vie ;
 From ductile gold, to draw the slender thread,
 And, through the robe, its blended radiance spread ;
 To cut the gem, and its clear brilliance show,
 And bid the amber, mix'd with ivory, glow.

135

140

With these the happier realms of wealth he sought,
 And every soil's and climate's produce bought ;
 And to his own inhospitable shore,
 Plenty, unknown to richer regions, bore.

145

Thus, on bare rocks, and unproductive iles,
 Art, taste, and luxury, diffused their smiles ; 150
 Cities, on desert promontories, grew,
 And wealth, from want, its best resources drew.

Man, rendered active by impulsive need,
 Still found his efforts his first aim exceed ;
 Still something more obtain'd than want required, 155
 And, that possess'd, still something more desired ;
 Wish sprang from wish, as emulation rose,
 And active pleasures banish'd dull repose.

Riches, by skill and industry acquired,
 The arts, that gave them being, still inspired ; 160
 Diffused ambition, and excited hope ;
 And bade bright fame, to all, her portals ope.

But wealth, that from spontaneous produce grows,
 Equal and slow, in lifeless currents flows,
 Lulling each busy passion of the breast 165
 In sensual apathy and sluggish rest.

While torpid indolence, o'er fertile plains,
 Spread the dull weight of slavery's gilded chains ;
 While rich Assyria kiss'd the despot's rod,
 And Egypt trembled at a master's nod ; 170
 While both in cold unactive stupor lay,
 And race on race unnoticed pass'd away,
 Freedom, in sterile Greece, its head uprear'd,
 And arts and letters dry Phœnacia cheer'd;

Genius o'er both diffused unequal rays, 175
 And led to deathless fame, through different ways.

Bless'd with the music of a tuneful tongue,
 Greece claim'd the glories of immortal song ;
 And by the poet's lays, her artists taught,
 The forms sublime of heavenly beauty caught; 180
 While, poetry and all its charms unknown,
 The sly Phœnicians toil'd for gain alone ;
 With splendid stuffs, and glittering toys, supplied
 Barbarian folly, and barbarian pride ;
 By avarice led, o'er ocean's waves prevail'd, 185
 And to far distant coasts and islands sail'd ;—
 Back the rich spoils of earth and water bore,
 To decorate their own dry barren shore ;
 And raise proud domes for ages to admire,
 On the bare rocks of Aradus and Tyre. 190

As from o'ershadowing caves, or hollow trees,
 Where, throng'd in clusters, swarm the busy bees,
 The annual broods still take their noisy flight,
 When numbers press, and vernal gleams invite ;
 In dusky clouds the airy way explore, 195
 Hang o'er the stream, and blacken all the shore ;
 Till far remote, beneath congenial skies,
 They plant new states, and bid new nations rise.

So, from the narrow isles, or barren coasts,
 Where busy commerce feeds her growing hosts, 200

When quarrels rise, or restless spirits glow,
 Adventurous bands to distant regions go ;
 Launch their full ships, and bid the wind and tide,
 As chance or heaven direct, their fortunes guide,
 Till some safe port again their fleet receives,
 Or fertile shore their urgent wants relieves.

205

There, on some spot, by fraud or force possess'd,
 The weary wanderers fix their place of rest ;
 The future walls of their new city trace,
 And raise a model of their native place ;
 Its customs follow, and its laws revive,
 And copy all the arts that made it thrive ;
 Each habit of their former lives renew,
 And trade and piracy again pursue.

210

Thus o'er the earth as restless passions led,
 Still subdividing, social nations spread ;
 Through different climes, and various tracts of space,
 Mix'd tribes with tribes, and mingled race with race ;
 Nature's varieties still varied more,
 And spread the motley broods from shore to shore.

215

But nature still her local sway maintain'd,
 And what she lost by force, by influence gain'd :—
 Natives and colonists alike, by time,
 Were moulded to the temper of the clime ;
 And from the various soils, on which they grew,
 Their colours, features, forms, and tempers drew.

220

If first, beneath the burning tropics bred,
 Man felt meridian sunbeams scorch his head ;
 The Ethiop's sable hue and bloated face,
 Display the image of his parent race ;
 And thus, in birds and quadrupeds, we find
 The sable hue still mark the parent kind ;
 And every change or accident still tend
 The shades to soften, or the tints to blend.

When cicatrized by wounds, or scarr'd by blows, 235
 In fainter tints the healing surface grows ;
 And from disease, or sorrow's cankerous blight,
 Untimely age bestrews the head with white ;
 While nature knows no secret, to renew
 Youth's sable glow, and hyacinthine hue. 240

The same effects from climate's cold proceed :—
 Pale silvery furs invest each polar breed ;
 Alike the timid hare and wary fox,
 In white are clothed, on Norway's frozen rocks ;
 For still less fervid flows the vital heat, 245
 As, from its parent's fires, its tides retreat ;
 And nature's efforts sicken and decay,
 When faintly cheer'd by heaven's congenial ray.

But social man still labours to supply
 What heaven and nature to the clime deny ;
 Warms his cold nerves with artificial heat,
 And makes his pulse, with borrow'd fervour, beat : 250

In huts and caves, the hardy race defy
 The freezing rigours of their wintry sky ;
 Quaff with tumultuous joy the foaming bowl,
 That stirs the spirits, and expands the soul ;
 That fires the heart, and bids the senses glow,
 'Midst the drear deserts and wide wastes of snow.

255

Yet still, where no rich produce decks the soil,
 Nor luscious fruits reward the planter's toil,
 No fix'd affections from possession flow,
 Nor local ties to social habits grow :

260

Their boundless wastes the northern shepherds range,
 As want impels, or fancy prompts, to change ;
 Swift, in light sledges, o'er the surface glide,
 Of the incrusted snow or harden'd tide ;
 The frozen river's spangled waters tread ;
 And on deep lakes their thick pavilions spread.

265

The flocks and herds, that still around them stray,
 Supply a ready unresisting prey :
 In milky streams, afford salubrious food,
 And feed their masters with their vital blood.

270

Averse alike to labour or repose,
 No stationary bliss the Scythian knows ;
 Nor thinks a heavier curse on man can fall,
 Than still to live encompass'd by a wall ;

275

To stagnate in one spot, and tamely feed
On the dry produce of a tasteless weed.

Alike averse to toil, but prone to ease,
Summer's soft brood their senses strive to please ; 280
In lazy luxury or idle play,
Charm the dull hours of lingering life away ;
And fix'd, like plants, still in their native spot,
Live but to feed, to propagate, and rot :
For, as their soil and clime spontaneous grant 285
Whate'er their natural appetites can want,
No other thoughts, their listless minds, employ,
Than, safe in peace, to slumber and enjoy.

Hence, from the torrid climes that gave him birth,
Man slowly spread his race around the earth ; 290
Expanded like the dews, that gently rise
From stagnant lakes, and melt into the skies ;—
Unseen arise, and as the heat exhales,
Sink in the air, and float upon the gales :

But, as when gathering clouds swift lightnings rend, 295
In pelting rains again those dews descend ;
Rush down the hills with loud tumultuous roar,
And o'er the plains in wasteful torrents pour ;
So, when mankind o'er earth's wide surface spread,
By temperate climes to social arts are led ;— 300
When slowly soften'd by their sway, they find
A milder temper gently mould the mind ;

The savage hordes, that throng around the pole,
 Back on the prostrate south impetuous roll ;
 Sweep every trace of social life away,
 And all in one wide waste of ruin lay.

305

Accustom'd from their earliest years to rove,
 Free and uncheck'd, the embodied nations move ;
 Still onward press, where glory points the way,
 And fertile realms their envied wealth display ;
 Where brighter suns on richer pastures shine,
 And ripening clusters swell with generous wine ;
 Fruits more delicious load the bending trees,
 And sweeter odours scent the vernal breeze.

310

Scared and abash'd, the sons of summer view
 Their rugged aspect, and their sanguine hue ;—

315

v. 305, &c. The completion of my plan has obliged me to follow Mr. Gray on a subject, which has called forth all the vigour and sublimity of his genius, and supplied him with materials, for the most splendid passage of his most splendid fragment on Education and Government. I feel and acknowledge, that all comparisons must be to my disadvantage; but, I hope, that as I have treated the subject much more at large than he has done, I shall not be condemned either as a feeble imitator, or presumptuous rival.

v. 315. The wandering nations of the north consisted of two distinct races of men; the one the farthest removed from, and the other the nearest approaching to, the Negro. The former principally inhabited the north of Europe, and the latter the north of Asia; though both were in some degree intermixed through both continents. The former were generally tall in stature, with fair complexions, red or light-coloured hair, long bushy beards, large blue or hazel eyes; and are known by the names of Germans, Celts, Goths, &c. The latter were short, but broad and robust in their make, with very dark complexions, small black eyes, deeply sunk in their heads, black hair, thin beards, flat noses, and thick lips;

In silent horror, and inert surprise,
 Shrink from their martial port and giant size ;
 Their thundering tones, and untuned accents hear
 With pale dismay, and unresisting fear.

320

As clouds of locusts on the winds arise,
 O'ershade the earth, and blacken all the skies ;
 Then on the verdant plains in myriads pour,
 Blast every tree, and every plant devour ;
 With dreary desolation mark their way,

325

And bid pale famine follow dire dismay :—
 Disease and death attend where'er they go,
 And silent solitude succeeds to pining woe :
 So, from her boundless plains and barren coasts,
 When frozen Scythia pours her countless hosts,

330

Nourish'd by slaughter, and inured to blood,
 In gathering swarms descend the savage brood ;—
 In waves impell'd by waves, still urge their course,
 Expand their volume, and augment their force ;
 Empires and kingdoms low in ruin lay,

335

And sweep their laws and governments away :

and are generally known by the names of Huns and Tartars. Nations of both descriptions are called Scythians by the ancient Greek writers. Most of the great revolutions of Europe have been produced by the former, and those of Asia by the latter; though from the account given by Captain Cook of the Tchutski, a people inhabiting the north-eastern extremity of Asia; it should seem, that the migrations of the former had extended even to that remote part of the latter continent. See *Voyage of 1778*, B. iv. c. ix.

Pale terror stalks before, and wasteful fire
 Flames in the rear, the minister of ire ;
 Promiscuous death and slaughter rage around,
 And age, and sex, and dignity, confound :—
 The long results of art and labour fall,
 And, once again, oblivion covers all.

340

Inured to see the helpless victim bleed,
 Which oft his infant hands had toil'd to feed,
 Which still secure, around his tent had play'd,
 Follow'd his footsteps, and his voice obey'd,
 The stern ferocious herdsman never felt
 His harden'd heart at others' sorrows melt ;
 Nor knew the mild contagious tears, that flow
 From the soft thrills of sympathetic woe :
 E'en lust and avarice scarce can make him save
 The beauteous damsel, or laborious slave.

345

By habit bent, his temper and his taste
 Approve the horrors of his native waste ;
 For though, with stern delight, the scenes he views,
 Where liberal nature all her treasures strews ;
 Though, pleased, he breathes the fragrance that exhales
 Where myrtle thickets scent the morning gales ;
 And quaffs, with greedy joy, the generous juice,
 Which richer soils, and warmer climes produce ;
 Yet fields inclosed and cultured lands impede
 The roving progress of his rapid steed ;

350

355

360

Confining and cramping the freedom of the race,
And spoiling the mimic warfare of the chase :

Whence devastation over all he pours,
And the wild hunter's savage waste restores ;
Bids fire, the refuse of the sword, consume,
And leave the world to solitude and gloom.

Till, slowly yielding, each succeeding race
Feels more and more the temper of the place;
Melts with the genial influence of the sky,
And courts the arts of ease and luxury;
Renews the social progress, and goes o'er
The gradual round, the natives went before:
Then sinks like them, and vanishes away,
To other hordes an unresisting prey.

Thus revolutions from each other sprung,
And o'er the earth alternate darkness flung ;
Oblivion follow'd, where destruction led,
And ignorance around its shadows spread ;
Nations on nations sunk into decay,
And unremember'd ages roll'd away.

Till some wise legislator's steady hand,
Made soil and climate own his firm command;
Form'd rigid laws unruly force to bind,
And fix the changeful temper of mankind;
Bent war to science, and with equal sway,
Made fighting hosts mechanic rules obey;

Condensed in order, taught fierce martial bands
 To know no impulse but their chief's commands ; 390
 Unmoved, each various chance of war to try,—
 Prepared alike to conquer or to die ;—
 Alike to bear, unshaken and sedate,
 The smiles of fortune, or the frowns of fate ;
 In ranks unbroken, to resign their breath, 395
 And guard each other in the grasp of death.

Thus, train'd through life, their purpose to pursue,
 No change from cliques their steady genius knew ;
 Around one centre still its force extends,
 And nature's self to laws and manners bends. 400

Such were the Grecian bands, that firmly stood,
 And dyed Platæa's fields with Persian blood :—
 Such, o'er the nations, pregnant with the doom
 Of states and empires, raised all-conquering Rome.

As wintry torrents, swell'd with sudden rains, 405
 Rise o'er their banks, and sweep the verdant plains ;
 Yet, soon as summer's breezes cheer the sky,
 Vanish and leave their shallow channels dry ;
 So, o'er the earth, the Scythian empires spread,
 And so their transitory glories fled : 410
 Leaving their progress only to be traced
 By desolation, solitude, and waste.

But as the river, that eternal flows
 From mountains clothed in everlasting snows,

Augments its stream as it extends its course, 415
 And mightier grows as farther from its source ;
 So Rome's strong empire still progressive grew,
 And states on states within its vortex drew ;
 Gather'd embodied nations round its throne,
 And mingled still their forces with its own ; 420
 Religion, language, laws, and manners join'd ;
 And all in one well order'd mass combined.

Cimbrians and Celts in vain its power assail'd :—
 Opposed to discipline, their numbers fail'd ;
 Nor e'en could civil wars and tumults shake 425
 The solid fabric, or its pillars break ;
 Till, to its own unbounded power a prey,
 It slowly moulder'd in mature decay ;
 Felt round its trunk its wither'd branches die,
 And all the streams of vital moisture dry ; 430
 Bow'd, in the dust, its venerable head,
 And rankled 'midst the weeds that round it spread.

Yet e'en thus sunk, some vivid force remain'd,
 And, from its roots, a rising brood maintain'd ;
 Lived in the states, which from its ruins grew, 435
 And taught its foes its spirit to renew :
 E'en the fierce hordes that prey'd upon its age,
 Felt its firm temper modify their rage ;
 Its laws and letters gradually received,
 Bent to its rites, and in its creeds believed. 440

Whence slow-reviving science raised its head,
 And arts o'er climes inhospitable spread :
 By meek devotion led, they gently stole
 From realm to realm, and brighten'd round the pole ;
 Deck'd Finland's bogs with piles of Grecian taste,
 And strew'd with cities cold Batavia's waste ;
 While culture spread around its influence mild,
 And plenty, o'er the barren deserts, smiled.

445

But still, where science first from freedom grew,
 And art first raised its miracles to view ;—
 Where Homer sang—where Aristotle thought ;
 Where Zeuxis painted, and Lysippus wrought ;
 Stern tyranny extends its iron chains,
 And darkness, cherish'd by oppression, reigns.

450

No Muses now Castalia's fountain knows ;
 No sages teach, where swift Ilissus flows :
 Through desert plains, and unfrequented shores,
 Its fertile streams rich Achelöus pours ;
 And, where it once bade golden harvests rise,
 Now taints with deadly damps the autumnal skies :
 No playful graces now, or wanton loves,
 Sport in Corinthian fanes or Paphian groves ;
 But beauty, yielding as a master sways,
 Hates, and caresses—shudders, and obeys ;—
 Imprison'd in the haram's cloister, pines,
 And all, that love should win, to force resigns.

460

465

O thou, who, from thy proudly trophied throne,
 Beam'st brightening science round the frigid zone,
 And, 'midst the conqueror's wreathes that shade thy brows,
 Gaily entwinest soft pleasure's blooming rose ; 470
 (Whate'er the titles that thy power express,) 475
 Empress, Czarina, or Autocratress !
 Ah, yet behold, where, 'midst her mouldering walls,
 Poor prostrate Greece for thy protection calls !
 O'er her deep wounds thy sceptre's balm extend,
 And be at once her conqueror and her friend !
 Then, from the dust, her genius shall appear,
 And art again its favourite regions cheer ;
 Aonian Muses shall their voices raise,
 To sing their great deliverer's deathless praise ; 480
 Pleased, in her all-accomplish'd mind, to trace
 Each manly virtue, and each female grace.

v. 467. It has been suggested to me, by a friend, that the late transactions in Poland make the propriety of this address somewhat questionable ; but it must be remembered, that the free constitution of that country, which has lately been destroyed, was the work of the Prussian party, and intended to counteract the interests of Russia, whose vast empire is vulnerable only on the Polish frontier.

In such a case, it is a nice question of political morality, how far the Empress was to let the general interests of humanity weigh, against the particular interests of the country for which, as sovereign, she is trustee ; and however philosophers in their closets may decide it, I believe, there is no practical statesman or politician, whether prince or minister, that would not decide it exactly as she did.

For still, round Dirce's spring and Delphi's steep,
The smother'd sparks of native genius sleep :—
Still echo lingers on that sacred ground,
And feeds upon the long departed sound ;
While memory shows each theme of ancient praise,
And kindles glory with reflected rays.

Rouzed by thy breath, again the sacred flame
Shall rise renew'd, and brighten round thy name ; 490
Favour and wealth shall dawning merit crown,
And bountiful the approaches to renown.

Small is the tribute which a monarch pays,
The inspired few, from indigence, to raise ;
And yet, how oft the niggard hand of pride
Has that small tribute to their wants denied :
See, Goldsmith lie, neglected and distress'd,—
By poverty, disease, and debts oppress'd !

v. 497. Goldsmith died at the early age of forty-five, of a fever, rendered mortal, as it frequently is, by mental agitation and distress. He had, as Johnson observed, practised every artifice of acquisition, and every folly of extravagance, and then owed near two thousand pounds; a great sum for a man, who had originally nothing but his learning and talents; but a trifle for the public or private munificence of a great nation, when the object was the preservation of one of the brightest ornaments to its language and literature. Under the direction of a liberal and judicious patronage, Goldsmith might have reached the highest degree of excellence in English poetry.

Dr. Johnson, labouring under a dropsy and asthma, at the age of seventy-five, was persuaded that he might regain his health in a warm climate. Application was accordingly

In want's cold hour, his flattering patrons fail,
And death alone protects him from a jail ! 500

See, Johnson's worth in vain a pittance crave,
To smooth his passage to the silent grave ;
While borrow'd millions, public waste, supply,
Unsuccour'd genius, taste, and learning die !

See, Chatterton——But ah ! fond Muse forbear, 505
In pity veil the horrors of despair ;
Nor let the indignant voice of fame relate
The heaven-born poet's melancholy fate ;—

made by Lord Thurlow, then Chancellor, at the solicitation of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Boswell, for an augmentation of his pension to enable him to travel with comfort ; but the request was refused !—Lord Thurlow generously offered to lend him money ; but the bounty of a sovereign prince, and the bounty of a private individual, however respectable and exalted, are very different things to the feelings of such a mind : s Johnson's. The request might have been granted at little or no expens ; for it could only have served to cherish hope during a few remaining months of painful existence ; but to cherish hope in such a situation, is among the most important offices of humanity.

It is a melancholy reflection, that though Great Britain has been more fertile in poetical genius, during the present age, than at any preceding period of her history, no important work has been produced. Johnson, Goldsmith, Churchill, Gray, and Chatterton, were all, in a great measure, lost to the Muses for want of proper encouragement ; and a still greater genius, who is now living, has sacrificed poetry to politics ; in which, whatever parties prevail, or whatever abilities he may display, he will have the mortification to find, that the cringing servility of a drudge in office, is a more effective recommendation to places of power and emolument, than all the splendours of the sublimest eloquence.

Hide his untimely end, when poison gave,
All he could hope on earth, a peaceful grave!—
In silent sorrow consecrate his name,
Nor let his glory be his country's shame.

510

BOOK VI. OF GOVERNMENT AND CONQUEST.

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PROGRESS OF CIVIL SOCIETY.

WHEN first the forms of civil rule began;
Each state was small, and simple was its plan ;
Persuasion, more than force, obedience taught,
As mutual interests mutual safety sought.

While wars and threatening dangers round them press'd, 5
The crowd alarm'd, their chieftain's power confess'd ;
Obedient follow'd where he led the way,
And bow'd submissive to his martial sway.

But pass'd the danger, powers undefined,
In vain assay'd the lawless herd to bind ; 10
In vain the regal sceptre graced the hand,
While no dependent force secured command ;
Nor superstition, with mysterious awe,
Gave to authority the strength of law.

Still oft as discord swell'd to civil broil,
Or avarice prompted to domestic spoil,
In vain the chief's precarious influence tried
To calm their passions, or their interests guide ; 15

Alone the assembled synod of the state
 Dared scan the offense, or fix the offender's fate; 20
 Alone the council, with collective sway,
 Imposed the fine, and made the guilty pay;
 Bent every member to its firm control,
 And bade the parts, in all, obey the whole.

But oft, by interest or by passion sway'd,
 Their partial vote the public trust betray'd;
 The cause of justice sacrificed, or sold,
 To secret favour, or alluring gold;
 Whence anarchy arose, and factious hate;
 And bloody tumult follow'd fierce debate: 30
 Nor kings nor senates could their rule maintain,
 Till threatening foes appear'd in arms again;
 Till public fear made private anger cease,
 And foreign war brought back domestic peace.

Hence chiefs ambitious labour'd to excite
 Their rival clans to try the doubtful fight;
 Their mutual jealousies and quarrels fed,
 And dark distrust, and hopes aspiring, spread;
 Made lust of power seem like love of fame,
 And avarice glitter under glory's name: 35
 Selfish ambition still with zeal pursued,
 Beneath the flattering mask of public good.

For still the victories, which round him blazed,
 The conquering chief to power despotic raised:

Soon doom'd their own successes to deplore, 45
 The chains, themselves imposed, the victors wore :
 The slaves of conquer'd provinces supplied
 Oppression's engines to usurping pride ;
 Treasures the servile minion to reward,
 To bribe the senate, and to pay the guard ; 50
 With force to crush the strong, the timid awe,
 And make the tyrant's will the nation's law.

Thus growing monarchies their heads uprear'd,
 Till countless myriads, one great sovereign, fear'd ;
 Proud man became the viceroy of his God, 55
 And saw submissive nations wait his nod :
 His power, made unborn generations feel,
 And to his race hereditary kneel ;
 Hail every knave, and worship every fool,
 Whom chance should elevate to regal rule. 60

But, lull'd and flatter'd by despotic sway,
 E'en power soon felt its energy decay :
 By no resistance rouzed, the vacant mind
 Sunk in lethargic indolence reclined ;
 Low groveling passions rankled in the breast, 65
 Perverted sense, and active thought suppress'd ;
 In sordid luxury the soul enchain'd,
 Quench'd all its fire, and all its force restrain'd ;
 While servile flattery, every vice, caress'd ;
 And still, in virtue's garb, its features dress'd ; 70

Bade vanity usurp a nobler name,
 And glitter in its robes of tinsel fame ;—
 Of tinsel fame, which venal praise supplies,
 From the frail impudence of courtly lies ;—
 Lies which, as fresh yet from the lips they part, 75
 Die contradicted by their author's heart.

Thus sway'd by feeble and unsteady hands,
 The regal sceptre doubtfully commands :
 The warrior Satraps scorn the distant rule
 Of the luxurious fop or drowsy fool ; 80
 Dread and despise the powers that wield the crown,—
 An eunuch's whisper, or a woman's frown ;
 And, urged by fear and bold ambition, try
 Their feeble master's empire to defy ;
 Their delegated power by force maintain, 85
 And round him draw their federative chain.

Whence favour oft the forced concession veil'd,
 And gracious monarchs gave, when forced to yield ;
 Confess'd the rebel's justice in his might,
 And own'd the self-created noble's right ; 90
 Maintain'd a limited precarious rule,
 In name a sovereign, and in fact a tool.

So Media's monarchs slowly pass'd away,
 And Persia's empire moulder'd to decay ;
 The Cæsars fell, in civil blood embrued, 95
 By their own hostile armies oft subdued ;

While the Mogul his regal title bears,
And yet his vassal's niggard bounty shares.

But oft, where conquest first its banners spread,
Elective chiefs, confederate warriors, led ;
Adventurous bands, whom equal rule unites,
In equal perils, and proportion'd rights ;
Whom common dangers and associate toils,
Make common sharers of the general spoils ;
Whose laws divide whate'er their valour gains,
And balanced power, bounded rule, maintains :
Allotted portions, every soldier, pay,
And some small district owns his petty sway ;
While, parcell'd and divided with their soil,
The vanquish'd natives for the victors toil.

100

105

110

But still, with jealous fear, the conquerors view'd
The servile numbers, whom their arms subdued ;
And, o'er the prostrate nation, thinly spread,
Held their despotic power with secret dread :
Whence still, their force united, to maintain,
They bade their chief, with powers extended, reign ;
Their lands, on terms of fix'd obedience, held,
And each to forfeit, or obey, compell'd ;
To wait his sovereign call, when wars alarms,
Or rising tumults, rouzed the state to arms ;
With titled ranks and graduated sway,
To lead, in order due, their long array :

115

120

Barons and knights, in trophied armour dress'd,
 Around the feudal monarch boldly press'd ;
 While servile hinds and squires, a menial train,
 Throng'd round their steeds, and darken'd all the plain. 125

With titled dignity, each chief adorn'd,
 The rabble, as inferior beings, scorn'd ;
 Look'd, from his elevated pride of place,
 Down on their sordid mercenary race ; 130
 And, as ideal greatness swell'd his soul,
 Felt, through his veins, a richer current roll ;
 Passions more high, his daring spirit, fire,
 And bid his arm to nobler deeds aspire.

Hence, foremost in the battle's heat, he tried 135
 To justify the haughty claims of pride ;
 And with mild courtesy, in peace, to prove
 An equal title to respect and love.

Rigid in honour, in punctilio nice,
 And e'en refining virtue into vice ; 140
 Too proud to learn, too obstinate to doubt ;
 Chaste, yet voluptuous ; and though fierce, devout ;
 In manners gentle, and in courage brave ;
 Each hero's foe, and every woman's slave ;
 By means of wrong, the champion still of right ;— 145
 Thus first appear'd the loyal, gallant knight.

Thus first, the cause of justice to maintain,
 To free the captive from the tyrant's chain ;

The robber's blood-stain'd ramparts to o'erthrow,
 And, pierced, to lay the savage giant low ;
 The enchanted damsel's waning form to save,
 From the magician's dark and secret cave ;
 To guard the meek from the oppressor's wrong ;
 Protect the feeble, and oppose the strong ;
 In armour cased, his palfrey he bestrode,
 And through the lawless world adventurous rode.

150

His own design, with hopes, his fancy fed,
 And onward still with glittering visions led ;
 Whilst wrongs, that rose from rights unascertain'd,
 Contentious discord in each realm, maintain'd ;
 And growing anarchy, in all, supplied
 Still rising feuds, and bade the sword decide :

160

For, form'd of balanced powers, but loosely join'd,
 No settled peace, could feudal kingdoms find :
 Contentious nobles, or a herd oppress'd,
 With broils internal still disturb'd their rest ;
 Unless when danger join'd them to oppose
 The slaughterous progress of external foes.

165

Thus, of defective laws the wayward child,
 Proud chivalry display'd its spirit wild ;
 In honour's forms restrain'd licentious rage,
 And smooth'd the roughness of a barbarous age :
 Gave discord rules, and made fierce war polite,
 And turn'd redundancy of wrong to right.

170

Hence artificial manners warp'd the mind, 175
 Solemn, yet gay—ferocious, yet refined ;
 And fashion its preposterous forms display'd,
 As wild caprice, or wanton fancy sway'd ;
 In tawdry glitter, and affected glare,
 Exhibited its stiff and hagard air ; 180
 To poetry and art, its influence, spread,
 And both, in wild eccentric mazes, led ;
 With fables, that a monk's belief defied,
 The place of fiction's natural grace, supplied ;
 And, with the exploits of giants and of knights, 185
 Monstrous achievements and unequal fights ;
 Unchanging love, that ever sigh'd in vain,
 Yet glow'd unceasing in the hero's brain ;
 (Glow'd in his brain, with sentimental fire,
 Free from all sensual lust, or base desire) 190
 To sublimated frenzy raised the mind,
 And bade it rove, no more by sense confined.

The fictions which, in Greece, the Muses graced
 With nature's easy style and simple taste ;
 (Whose art embellish'd, not disguised her plan, 195
 And, in the hero, still preserved the man)
 In vain their pleasing images address'd,
 Unto the harden'd, or perverted breast ;
 For, as the palate, with strong viands cloy'd,
 Soon feels its finer faculties destroy'd ; 200

So, with bombastic fictions cloy'd, the mind
 Loses its relish for each juster kind ;
 And, while it reads of knights who giants brave,
 Scatter whole armies, and whole realms enslave,
 Scorns poor Ulysses in the Cyclops' cave.

205

But still, though habit, nature's power, suspends,
 Each native impulse to restore it tends :
 Strong, though conceal'd, the principle remains,
 And slowly breaks from fashion's magic chains.

The balanced powers, that feudal kingdoms tore,
 Slow, to one point, their struggling interests, bore ;
 A master's rule, or senate's influence, own'd,
 And, by submission, peace and safety, found.

210

Cherish'd in peace, and nourish'd by repose,
 Again just taste, and genuine science rose ;
 Slowly reverted back to nature's plan,
 And traced the progress which they first began.

215

Such was the blissful state that Europe knew,
 Ere Gaul's dire hydra in its centre grew.

From snowy Finland's swamps and frozen seas,
 To where dry Calpé meets the southern breeze ;
 From damp Ierne's ever-clouded shore,
 To where the eternal fires of Etna roar ;
 Howe'er, by different governments arranged,—
 Howe'er restricted, modified, or changed ;—

220

225

Howe'er by some enlarged, by some confined,—
 Just order ruled, and freedom cheer'd mankind :
 Science and taste, aspiring genius, fed,
 And legal power, its mild protection, spread.

Though northern despots make their will the law, 230
 And mitred monks, the feeble south, o'erawe ;
 Though trading magistrates, their trust, betray,
 And princes sell their subjects' blood for pay ;
 Yet, with the good compared, the ills were small,
 While social order regulated all ; 235
 While every sovereign ruled by general laws,
 Nor e'er was judge and party in the cause ;
 Nor yet descended from his regal state,
 To glut, with private wrongs, his private hate.

E'en hard oppression, thus by law defined,
 Allows some consolation to the mind ;
 And ills determined, which whole nations share,
 Each individual calmly learns to bear ;
 Since e'en the oppressive weight, that bends him down,
 Is no peculiar evil of his own ; 240
 No unprovoked and arbitrary wrong,
 Which makes the weak the victim of the strong ;
 Which leaves no rule, the obedient will, to guide ;
 But bids the moment's whim in all decide :
 Such as, in tyrannies of ancient times, 245
 Treasons in talents found, in virtues crimes ;

Or such as, form'd supreme in blood to shine,
Atrocious Robespierre ! distinguish'd thine.

Beneath each titled despot's steadier sway,
Safely they live, who tranquilly obey ;
Who court the arts of luxury and ease,
Who pleased, are happy, and are bless'd to please ;
Who, free from busy strife, their hours employ,
May ever safely live, and life's best fruits enjoy.

The monarch, guarded by acknowledged right,
Feels no ill-boding fears, his hate, excite ;
Nor dark suspicions irritate his power,
Inflame his passions, or his temper, sour.

Though rigid laws and forms despotic reign,
Manners, that polish, lighten still the chain ;
Though priests to persecute may still aspire,
No more their hapless victims feed the fire ;
No more, amidst fanatic shouts and cries,
The martyr'd heretic in torture dies :
Though still, in form, each feudal lord maintains
The little empire of his own domains ;
Yet, forced his sovereign's mightier power to own,
His subjects are the subjects of the throne ;
From petty teasing jurisdictions free,
And fearing only one great tyranny.

Through all, its golden chains, rich commerce spread,
And hostile passions, to one centre led ;—

255

260

265

270

275

Of distant realms the adverse interests, join'd,
Soften'd their manners, and their arts refined.

Hence the rich wines, Iberian mountains bear, 280
The torpid Russian's dreary mansion cheer ;
Whilst the hard metal from Siberian mines,
Supplies the tools which prune the Spaniard's vines ;—
Supplies the tools, which British arts produce
In proper form, and fashion into use. 285

Whate'er the fertile east and south afford,
In polar regions crowns the festive board ;
While, for the products of their clime and soil,
They share the gifts of northern skill and toil :
In the loose robes, that British looms have wove, 290
Arabian chieftains, o'er their deserts, rove ;
And Lyons once, with splendid stuffs, supplied
The costly trappings of the haram's pride.

Unhappy Lyons ! once the rich—the gay :—
Of ruthless tyrants now the helpless prey :— 295
Low in the dust her envied splendour lies,
Bewail'd by widows' tears, and orphans' cries ;
While, o'er her spacious quays and double shore,
Stalks the assassin grim'd in guiltless gore ;—
Marks every tear, and numbers every sigh, 300
And dooms the wretch, who weeps, unheard to die :—
—There, where the long and melancholy train
Of parents—brothers—children—all were slain ;

Where wounded at the breast the infant clung,
And o'er her child the dying mother hung ;—

305

Where screams of murder'd friends re-echoed round,

And stains of kindred blood yet dye the ground ;

Where still their mangled limbs, scarce hid from view,

Infect the air, and taint the morning dew ;

The wretched relict roams, all chill'd with fear,

310

Nor dares bestow a solitary tear.

E'en the poor comfort, grief itself supplies,

The obdurate tyrant's cruelty denies ;

And bids the face of anguish and despair,

The mask of joy and gratulation wear.

315

Say, whence proceeds this direful scene of woe :—

Did savage Huns inflict the fatal blow,

Or Scythian spoilers cause their blood to flow ?

The slaughtering sword, did murderous Cossacks wield,

Or vengeful Calmoucks pierce them on the field ?

320

No :—by their country's arms their blood was shed ;—

By those, whom the same soil and climate fed ;—

Not in the battle's heat, or tumult's rage,

Where hostile passions life for life engage :—

But coldly doom'd, by cruelty sedate,

325

To the slow murder of deliberate hate :—

And did not general indignation burn,

And every heart and hand to vengeance turn ?—

Did not a nation's voice for justice call,

And swift destruction on the murderers fall?

330

No:—grown familiar to each slaughterous deed,

The nation triumphs while her children bleed:

Mercy's mild voice, the rabble's rage o'erawes,

With savage yells, and shouts of hoarse applause:

From crime to crime, infuriate still they go,

335

And bid fresh streams of blood, still issuing, flow;

From sea to sea, wide devastation, spread,

And heap their shores with gathering piles of dead:

Nor suppliant beauty's tears, nor reverend age,

Can the dire fury of their hearts assuage;

340

In heaps promiscuous maids and matrons lie,

And hoary sires, and feeble infants die.

Daughter of memory, inspiring Muse,

With horror shrink not, nor thy aid refuse:

Tell future ages, whence this rage began,

345

That made the social worse than savage man.

As when the stranger, from some neighbouring height,

First sees a city rising to his sight,

The splendid parts alone, his eye surveys,

Which o'er the rest their domes and turrets raise;

350

And in its walls, alone, expects to find

Stately magnificence with taste combined:

But when arrived, at every turn, he meets

Mean edifices crowding dirty streets;

And scarce discovers, as perplex'd he roams,
High o'er his head, the thinly scatter'd domes.

355

So, from his pride of place, the tool of state
Only beholds the wealthy and the great ;
And, in his distant transitory view,
Distinguishes alone the mighty few :—
The mighty few, who, to each other known,
Think of no other interests but their own ;
And, while on fortune's seas they smoothly sail,
Wafted by pleasure's soft delusive gale,
In lazy luxury securely sleep,

360

Nor heed the monsters that frequent the deep ;
That lurk beneath, and, as in shoals they stray,
Expect the storm, and watch their destined prey.

365

But let him from his dizzy height descend,
And through life's darksome ways, his footsteps bend ;
Let him frequent the busy scenes below,
And through their crowded streets and alleys go ;
He'll find the gilded puppets, that on high
Alone appear'd and glitter'd to his eye,
Scarcely distinguish'd in the bustling throng,
Which, in still growing numbers, rush along ;
And, as their various occupations lead,
Press into crowds, or in detachments spread.

375

The hardy sons of penury and toil,
Who tend the flock, or cultivate the soil,

380

Thinly diffused and scatter'd o'er the earth,
 Dully pursue the fortunes of their birth ;
 In torpid apathy, still onward creep,
 Content to feed, to propagate, and sleep.

But when, for trade in busy crowds they join,
 Or throng the caverns of the gloomy mine ;
 When growing capital, their swarms, collects,
 And nice arrangement, different arts, connects ;
 The gathering multitudes, that thus unite,
 Each other's passions, quicken and excite ;
 Feel courage from their active numbers rise,
 And learn, their lazy rulers, to despise.

Then sordid luxury, their reason, blinds,
 Hardens their hearts, and brutifies their minds ;
 In grovelling lusts they spend their hours of rest,
 Or lie, in swinish drunkenness, oppress'd ;
 By no respect o'erawed, or shame withheld,
 They move by interest led, or want impell'd ;
 The world's free citizens,—whom still the hand
 That pays, alone can influence or command.

While strong and full the tide of commerce flows,
 And wealth and plenty o'er the nations throws :
 While steady laws, with power efficient reign,
 Order and rule and justice to maintain ;
 Lull'd, but not quench'd, their turbid passions doze,
 In doubtful peace, and insecure repose.

385

390

395

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405

But, as from some high mountain's craggy brow,
 Roll the accumulated piles of snow ;
 And, still increasing, as they urge their course,
 Rush through the forests with collected force ;
 Break the tall cedars that obstruct their way,
 And giant oaks, before them, prostrate lay :
 So, urged by want, or loosen'd from control,
 The rabble's growing numbers onward roll ;
 Before them crush each high-aspiring head,
 And on their fallen kings and nobles tread ;
 With savage vengeance and wild fury tear,
 Whate'er they once beheld with awe or fear.

410

In vain the demagogues, who stirr'd their rage,
 The tempest, which they raised, would now assuage ;
 In vain its sanguinary course oppose :—
 —Who dare resist it are the people's foes ;
 Instantly doom'd to perish or comply ;—
 To lead to murder, or themselves to die :
 Vengeance and lust, and avarice combine
 To drown remorse, and cruelty refine :—
 From sophistry confusion gets a plan,
 And rapes and murders grow the rights of man.

415

420

425

v. 411. In the Alps I have seen these effects produced, by what they call *avalanches* of snow.

v. 428. America having no great manufactories, had none of these mobs, and was therefore able to go through her revolution in peace. England had none in the time of

As valiant cockneys, who have oft defied,
 At London Bridge, the dangers of the tide ; 430
 And dared, undaunted, from their barge, to view
 The gulfs and shoals, which reach from thence to Kew ;
 If on the ocean launch'd, with pale surprise,
 Hear the winds roar, and see the billows rise ;
 Expect their fate in every driving blast, 435
 And think each fleeting moment is their last ;
 So, when the formal slaves of office see
 The tempests rise of lawless liberty ;—
 Bred to the little tricks and forms of state,
 The intrigues of court, and mockeries of debate— 440
 Confused and terrified, they stand and gaze,
 While, spreading still, the approaching ruins blaze ;
 While kingdoms sink, and empires totter round,
 And prostrate cities strew the ensanguined ground :

Charles I. and the long parliament, and little, to what she has now, in the year 1688. Since that time, the inhabitants of the country have been gradually decreasing, and those of the manufacturing and trading towns rapidly increasing, which will give a dreadful momentum to popular commotion, if ever it should take place. I do not mean to undervalue the wisdom, virtue, and temperance of those who conducted the American revolution, or to apologize for the rashness, violence, and ambition of the leaders of the French; on the contrary, I think it probable, that, had the Duke of Orleans, La Fayette, and Mirabeau, been such men as Washington, Franklin, and Adams, France might have been now happy in a free constitution; and quite certain, that if the latter had at all resembled the former, America would have suffered all the miseries of anarchy and slavery.

—Too feeble to oppose, too proud to treat,
They hide each loss, and cover each defeat;
And, 'midst the threatening wrecks, alone provide
To palliate their own poor selfish pride.

445

Yet happy Britain ! ere it is too late,
Shun the dire horrors, that thy rashness wait :
See, in thy bosom, the same hydras rise,
And learn, from other's sufferings, to be wise :—
See, the same giddy pilots guide thy state,
And yet avoid thy wretched neighbour's fate :
Dismiss the venal and the useless train,

450

That waste thy vigour, and thy vitals drain ;
Shake off the leeches, that, at every pore,
Empty thy veins, and fatten on thy gore ;
And, while thy power with Gallic foes contends,
Ah, shun the direr curse of German friends ;
Whom still thy treasures, wrung from misery, pay,
To mock thy sufferings, and thy cause betray.

455

Be thy own friend, and let thy children know,
That, for themselves, their blood and treasures flow ;
That not ambitious hopes, or vengeful pride,
Lead on thy armies, or thy councils guide ;
But that thy sword, impartial justice draws,
To save thy liberties, and guard thy laws.

460

Repair the waste of age and time's decay,
That slowly on thy constitution prey ;

465

470

Which, with narcotic power, its limbs assail,
 And o'er its vital principles prevail :—
 To guard its energy, its virtue prove,
 And make it potent in a people's love !

On adamantine pillars stands the throne,

475

Whose subjects feel, its interests are their own ;
 But frail and transient is its gloomy sway,
 When terror only bids its slaves obey ;
 Or sly corruption makes the herd despise
 The wretch who sells them, and the rogue who buys ; 480
 E'en its own end perverts, while it employs,
 To gain its object, what its worth destroys.

The armed hosts, that at the palace gate,
 Guard the proud despot, and his orders wait,
 Are but a rabble, faithful to their pay,
 Prepared alike to serve, or to betray.

See Russia's lord, scarce to his people known,
 Hurl'd by their venal treachery from his throne ;
 And France's monarch, by his army sold,
 For a small donative of promised gold : 490

v. 490. The standing army of France, seems to have been better adapted for giving stability to the monarchy, than any that ever existed. The officers were men of property, attached to their sovereign by principles of honour, as much as interest ; and the soldiers were enlisted, for certain periods of three, seven, or ten years, and therefore looked up to their officers, as guardians of the national faith, which was always religiously kept to them.

See, too, her nobles, whose high pride of blood
 Honour'd and reverenced had through ages stood,
 By a low servile rabble swept away,
 Like the frail insects of a summer's day ;—
 —A rabble long to cruelty inured, 495
 And harden'd by the wrongs themselves endured ;
 By frequent scenes of dreadful horror taught
 To banish every mild and generous thought ;
 And with cold apathy, unmoved to see
 Death's direst forms of lengthen'd agony : 500
 Vindictive laws and punishments refined,
 Harden, while they intimidate the mind ;
 Which grows obdurate, as it oft reviews
 The last dire scenes of Damien and Desrues :—

Yet was this vast body crumbled to pieces in a moment, by the single promissory vote of a parcel of attorneyes, abbés, and pamphleteers ; for of such did the tiers etat in the states general principally consist.

To control the growing power of manufacturing mobs, barracks are now erecting near to every great town. This is an easy and obvious expedient, not unlike that of the sailor, who finding his horse liable to stumble, tied a stone to his tail.—*sed quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* It was the opinion of the late King of Prussia, that the fidelity and obedience of soldiers, were best preserved by keeping them dispersed in quarters ; and suffering them to assemble as little as possible, except when under arms, and in the presence of their officers. How much wiser we are, in matters of this kind, than that great man, I shall not presume to inquire ; though I cannot but think, that by arming and embodying the principal householders, and thus making a militia of property in the great towns, a more safe, constitutional, and effectual guard for the public peace might be obtained.

v. 504. The cruelties exercised on the poor lunatic Damien, (who was even more mad

Scenes which, infix'd in memory, remain, 505
 And fancy's images with horror stain ;
 Each mild impression from the heart erase,
 And, with terrific gloom, the soul debase.

than Margaret Nicholson) are, to the everlasting disgrace of the old government of France, but too well known.

Bury Desrues, a man of liberal education, was in the year 1777, condemned at Paris, for poisoning a Madame La Motte, to be broke on the wheel, and then burned alive. By the strength of his own constitution, and the skill of the executioner, he was enabled to retain his senses, and sensibility, through every stage of this dreadful punishment ; so that when placed upon the pile, amidst the flames that were rising to consume his mangled limbs, he solemnly and emphatically declared his innocence.

As this declaration made some impression on the public mind, an exaggerated account of the evidence on which he was convicted, together with many aggravating circumstances of his former life, was published : still, however, the case appeared doubtful, the evidence being all circumstantial, and most of it such as ought not to have been received in any court of justice. To supply, therefore, its defects, and justify the judges, a confession was obtained, or pretended to have been obtained, from the widow of the deceased, in a manner which proves that even the worst of the revolutionary tribunals, have not added much to the iniquity and barbarity of their predecessors.

Madame Desrues was a young, beautiful, and delicate woman ; and though there was not a shadow of evidence against her, she was taken up with her husband, and kept in close and solitary confinement. After his execution, and the doubts raised of his guilt, a spy of the police, dressed in a military uniform, with a croix de St. Louis, was introduced to her as an officer of rank, who might procure her a pardon from the king, if she would clear up the matter, by a free confession. After repeated interviews, in which neither promises or threats were spared, this fellow produced a confession, which he swore that he obtained from her ; but which no one overheard, and which she not only refused to confirm, but constantly denied.

The judges here found themselves in a new dilemma, for though they now thought

Yet happy Britain ! never may thy law
 Let dire revenge the sword of justice draw ; 510
 Nor e'er the agonies of death prolong,
 To make the means of right the worst of wrong.

The life depraved, which justice cannot mend,
 Public and private safety bid it end ;
 But let it still show mercy where it can, 515
 Nor e'er forget, the sufferer is a man :—

themselves completely justified in what they had done to her husband, they were totally at a loss what to do with her. To grant the promised pardon, and turn her loose into the world, while she denied the imputed confession, might afford her the means of clearing the matter more than they wished ; and to follow the ordinary mode of proceeding in such doubtful cases (which would have been to enforce a confirmation of the pretended confession by torture, and then to have condemned her to death upon it) was so manifestly and atrociously unjust and inhuman, that even their well-disciplined consciences shrunk from it. They therefore took that middle course, which timid and embarrassed iniquity always does take :—they condemned her to be publicly whipped and branded, and imprisoned in the *Salpetriere* for life ; meaning, by the first part of the sentence, to place her in such a situation of ignominy, that nothing, which she could say, would have any credit ; and by the second to deprive her of any hearers, whose credit might give it consequence. These proceedings were openly avowed and talked of at Paris, where I was at the time ; nor did any one seem to think them peculiarly iniquitous or unjust. On the contrary, this mode of entrapping persons accused, into confidential confessions, and then compelling them to confirm them, was common in all the courts in the kingdom. Similar arts, both of menace and persuasion, were tried on the woman servant of Calas ; but she was firm and guarded ; otherwise the guilt of that unfortunate man might have been as little questioned, as that of Desrues. Indeed, it never had been questioned, but for the zeal, spirit, and activity, with which M. de Voltaire patronized his family after his death.

v. 516. “ *Ye forget that ye are men,*” said the poor lunatic Damien to his tormentors.

A creature frail, whose virtues, at the best,
 Of adverse fortune seldom stand the test ;
 Who oft impell'd, and sometimes led, to ill,
 Is rarely wicked from impartial will ;—
 By nature form'd to steer a middle course,
 Till chance inclines to better or to worse ;
 And circumstances nature's stamp deface ;
 Exalt in virtue, or in vice debase.

520

Then let not legislators think to find,
 Or render perfect, the still varying mind :—
 Still, as he is, let them consider man,
 Nor for more perfect beings form their plan.

525

Let Britain's laws abuses still correct,
 And from corruption's fangs her state protect ;
 But let not wild reforms or systems vain,
 The legal influence of command restrain.

530

The rank of office and the pride of place,
 Let wealth sustain, and titled honours grace ;
 Let patronage and splendour guard the throne,
 And all, its dignity and influence, own ;
 For wealth, where well secured, o'er all will reign,
 And its possessor's power, supreme, maintain :

535

—They did, indeed, forget that they were not devils. A committee of surgeons sitting to invent tortures for this poor wretch, presents a more horrid picture of the atrocity of human nature, than even the late revolutionary tribunals of Lyons and Nantes.

Without it empire is an empty name,
Or the faint glimmer of a vapoury flame ;
Which only dazzles and distracts the sight,
But yields no glowing heat, or cheering light.

540

But the vain waste, that feeds a venal tribe,
The useless office, and the sanction'd bribe,
Afford no vigour to the arm of power,
But dim its splendour, and its strength devour ;
Scatter distrust and discord through the state,
And sow the seeds of avarice and hate ;
Corrupt the morals, and the spirit bend,
And sordid selfishness through all extend.

545

550

As the same sun, whose vivifying heat,
Bids the strong pulse of animation beat,
Corrupts the mass inert, on which its rays
Too fiercely dart their hot meridian blaze ;
And, from the foul putrescent lump, exhales
Mephitic damps, to taint the passing gales :
So the same wealth, whose mild prolific tides
Waft peace and plenty, wheresoe'er it glides ;
And, whilst in arts and elegance it shines,
Softens the manners and the soul refines ;
If shower'd down on every servile drone,
Who basks before, or skulks behind the throne,
Plants foul corruption's weeds in honour's springs,
And noxious vapours o'er its currents flings ;

555

560

Rob's regal rule of magisterial awe, 565
 And makes respect for power, contempt of law.

Yet happy Britain!—with proportion'd weights,
 Guard the just balance of thy three estates ;
 For, in that balance only, canst thou find
 Order and rule with liberty combined : 570

Man's feeble virtue can't itself maintain,
 Unless some curb each bold excess restrain :
 Whence, still, dominion, in one centre placed,
 By foul injustice ever is disgraced :—
 Kings or Conventions—they are still the same— 575
 Despots, that differ only in a name.

Let then severe reciprocal control
 Poize every part, and regulate the whole ;
 But still avow'd and open let it be,
 The same in name, as in reality : 580
 Never let secret influence devise,
 For base corruption, any thin disguise ;

v. 569. See Mr. Adams's very able defense of the constitution of the United States of America ; where the necessity of three estates to form a free government is most clearly and fully demonstrated, both by reason and example. It is only to be lamented, that the author's more important occupations, and the haste with which it was written, on the spur of an occasion, did not allow him time to correct all his historical facts. The errors, indeed, are not of a kind to affect either his general arguments or conclusions ; but nevertheless they disfigure a work, which every friend to order and civil liberty, must wish to see as perfect in the form as it is in the matter.

Nor screen the servile pension from disgrace
 Beneath the title of an useless place :
 For he who takes the bribe, yet shuns its name,
 Avows his guilt in that which hides its shame.

585

Bless'd is the man, how low soe'er his state,
 Who feels no favour, and who fears no hate ;
 Who knows no patron, and who owns no friend,
 That dares to more than equal rights pretend ;
 Who still, without ingratitude, can scorn
 Each knave or fool, whom wealth and power adorn !

590

Not all the joys of the luxurious feast,
 Not all the splendours of the gorgeous East,
 Not even beauty's smiles, nor sceptred sway,
 The loss of mental freedom can repay.

595

'Tis the pure sunshine of the unclouded soul,
 That gives its light and colour to the whole :—
 Without it, art's and nature's glories fade,
 And all the world is one dull mass of shade :—
 Pleasure grows vapid, and impartial fame
 Still damns, as it exalts, each dirty name.

600

O then, if virtue's loftier motives fail,
 At least let interest in her cause prevail !
 For your own sakes, corruption's lures despise,
 Nor quit the real for the shadowy prize !
 The best of wealth is dignity of mind,
 Which he, who dares deserve, is sure to find.

605

But ah ! I hear the sons of selfish pride
 These old exploded principles deride :—
 Like drunken mariners, they only care
 The plunder of the sinking ship to share ;
 And, while the yawning billows round them rise,
 And ope the gulphs of fate before their eyes,
 Each, by some little selfish interest led,
 Bids the waves dash, and lets the ruins spread ;
 Guards his poor dirty treasure, and alone
 Clings to the plank he vainly thinks his own.

610

Hail happy States, that, fresh in vigour, rise
 From Europe's wrecks, beneath Atlantic skies !
 Long may ye feel the blessings ye bestow ;
 Nor e'er your parent's sickly symptoms know !
 But when that parent, crush'd beneath the weight
 Of debts and taxes, yields herself to fate,
 May you, her hapless fugitives, receive ;
 Comfort their sorrows, and their wants relieve !
 For, come it will—the inevitable day,
 When Britain must corruption's forfeit pay,
 Beneath a despot's, or a rabble's sway.

615

O, while she yet eludes that dreadful doom,
 May this frail body sink into the tomb !
 Here, on thy shady banks, pellucid Team,
 May Heaven bestow its last poetic dream,

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Nor let me live, in climes remote, to know
 For what fell spoiler thy loved waters flow !
 Here, may these oaks, in life's last glimmer, shed
 Their sober shadows o'er my drooping head ;
 And those fair Dryads, whom I sang to save,
 Reward their poet with a peaceful grave !

635

Though equal beauties grace Atlantic streams,
 And waves as clear reflect more genial beams ;
 Though, deep-embower'd, each limpid current flows,
 And richer foliage o'er its margin grows ;
 Yet, no bright visions to the soul it brings ;—
 No Muses drink at Appalachian springs ;—
 No poet's voice, or charm of mimic art
 Soothes the tired sense, or captivates the heart :—
 All arts are there pursued for gain alone ;
 And those are arts, the Muses ne'er have known ;
 Nor can their followers, when in life's decline,
 Their pleasing toys, for those wise arts, resign.

645

In early youth, the exile doom'd to roam,
 Where'er he goes, still finds, or makes a home ;
 His habits moulds, and his affections bends
 To meet each change of life, and change of friends :
 Before him, brightening visions, fancy shews,
 And with the flowers of hope his paths bestrews :—
 Vigorous in body, and in mind elate,
 He braves distress, and triumphs o'er his fate.

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655

But when, in life's decline, and health's decay, 660
 Unfeeling power condemns the wretch to stray ;
 He tears, while feebly struggling to depart,
 The strings, which time hath wound about his heart ;
 And finds, when of his early friends bereft,
 No gleam of hope, or ray of comfort left :— 665
 'Midst unknown crowds, he lingers but to drain
 The bitter cup of solitary pain ;
 Or vainly toils, affections to renew,
 When death, approaching, darkens every view ;
 Chills all that's near, and all that's distant, shrouds 670
 In cold oblivion's everlasting clouds :—
 Neglected and forgot by all, he lies ;
 Forsaken lives, and unlamented dies,
 Without one pitying friend to close his eyes.

Unhappy mortals ! who, with endless hate, 675
 Each plague, which nature bids you shun, create ;
 Who taint, with strife, each spring of social joy,
 And then lament what you yourselves destroy !
 In vain you tremble at avenging fires ;—
 The worst of devils are your own desires. 680

Not all the maladies, intemperance gave
 To lead, through pain and misery, to the grave ;
 Not that last curse, which, ere we draw our breath,
 Plants, in the source of life, the seeds of death ;

Not e'en the bigot's dreams of hell, can find
An enemy like man to plague mankind.

685

Press'd by the hand of power, we freedom crave,
Ourselves beneath worse tyrants to enslave ;—
Heaven hears the prayer, by ignorance address'd,
And damns whole nations at their own request.

690

Yet, let not willing slavery hug its chain,
Nor boast the blessings of a despot's reign ;
For e'en the fever, which the body shakes,
Oft, the numb'd seeds of vital vigour, wakes ;
Purges the dregs of vice inert away ;
And raises virtue sinking to decay.
Did only gentle gales o'er ocean blow,
The mass, unmoved, would dull and putrid grow ;
Foul exhalations, from its gulphs, would spread,
And o'er the earth their vapoury poisons shed ;
But the same hurricane, which lifts the waves
Towhelm whole navies in untimely graves,
Clears the putrescent waters of the deep,
And rouzes nature from her morbid sleep.

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THE END.



